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The Shape of Things

BY ESTABLISHING THE WAR-PRODUCTION Board under the supreme command of Donald M. Nelson the President moved away from the balance-of-power theory which has caused so much confusion and overlapping of authority in the past. We hope Mr. Nelson will prove to have the "touch" of his great naval namesake, who knew that victories were won by imagination combined with organization. He is one of the few business men brought to Washington during the emergency who has enhanced his reputation there and won the respect of the New Dealers without losing that of the business world. Mr. Nelson was formerly a kind of procurement chief for the greatest merchandising organization in the country—a job which required not only buying skill but the ability to inspire and assist manufacturers in the mass production of popularly priced goods. This means that his chief experience has been with the light industries; now, as I. F. Stone points out in his Washington letter, he has to tackle the capital-goods monopolies. Among his greatest recommendations are a real vision of what is needed to beat the Axis and a strong belief that America can and will do the job. In some quarters, however, there are doubts about whether Mr. Nelson is as tough as he will have to be. Among those who must now take his orders are some very hard-boiled gentlemen who will want to go on running things their way and will be out to get him if they can.

*

HITLER HAS BROUGHT THE BATTLE OF THE Atlantic right up to our shores, perhaps with the design not merely of destroying valuable shipping but of upsetting American morale and influencing the Rio conference. Another objective may be to present proof to Japan that Germany is in a position to offer something more than moral support. Certainly this foray into our home waters is going to add to the present burden on the navy, and it might necessitate convoying coastal shipping. It may prove possible, however, to simplify that task by instructing all ships to keep close to shore and providing constant patrols of shore-based aircraft. The sinking of four ships within five days between Nova Scotia and North Carolina indicates that a pack of submarines is in

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operation. Survivors of a torpedoed Panamanian freighter who have reached Canada report U-boats as "thick as catfish," including one or more "little ones." Since only the bigger types have sufficient range to cruise independently from European bases, this suggests either that a "mother" ship is being employed or that Germany has the use of some base nearer than the coast of France. Could this be the Azores? A third possibility is that secret depots have been established somewhere on this side of the Atlantic. Despite the vigilance of the British and Canadian navies, it is not inconceivable that a hide-out could be found in one of the innumerable bays of northern Newfoundland.

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POLITICAL WAR IN RIO HAS DEVELOPED during the first eight days of the conference fairly closely along the lines predicted in *The Nation* last week. Sumner Welles delivered one of the best speeches that could have been made, and to judge from reactions in Latin American quarters he has employed his considerable talents in trying to smooth out the difficulties of a very complex situation. But the most subtle envoy could hardly correct in a week the mistakes his own department has been making for a year. A year of appeasing Castillo, in direct disregard of the advice of our real Argentine friends, is having its effects in Rio. Whatever formula it may agree to, Castillo's Argentine remains the *grand saboteur* of hemispheric solidarity. Largely for geographical reasons Chile, with its long coastline and its islands in the Pacific exposed to the threat of Japanese attack, is also showing a hesitation that must be disheartening to the Chilean delegation itself. It can be assumed that in the end some sort of resolution indorsing a break with the Axis powers will be adopted, with the Argentine, Chile, and perhaps one or two other small South American countries abstaining or agreeing to a compromise. But this will not wipe out the fact that a political battle had to be fought at a conference where spontaneous and unanimous agreement should have been the normal course. It is that feeling which makes it difficult to discount entirely the confidence with which the spokesman of the German Foreign Office referred on January 20 to the prospective resolution in Rio supporting the rupture "of certain Latin American countries with the Axis" as "a pure technicality."

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THE SURRENDER OF THE AXIS FORCES IN THE Halfaya Pass will considerably ease British communications over the long line which now separates their Egyptian bases from the army fighting General Rommel in eastern Tripolitana. It should also release troops and equipment for that battle, which seems to have reached a temporary stalemate. There are indications that despite the havoc wrought by the British fleet in attacking convoys some additional Axis reinforcements and equipment have reached North Africa at a time when the strengthening of the British position in that region must be weighed against the urgent demands of other fronts, notably Singapore. Rumors of Nazi plans for a spring drive in the Mediterranean, including possibly an attack on Turkey, may have been deliberately circulated as part of the war of nerves. But there are indications that they cannot be taken lightly. In the past week the much-bombed fortress of Malta has been facing aerial assaults of increasing intensity, suggesting that an effort may soon be made to remove that very sharp thorn in the side of the Axis. Malta's importance as a naval base is no longer very great, but as an air base it has been playing a great part in the Battle of the Mediterranean, sending out bombers north and south to attack both Sicily and Tripoli and to harry Italian shipping transporting men and supplies to North Africa.

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ANOTHER SHARP THORN CAUSING ACUTE pain to both Germany and Italy is the growing guerrilla army of General Draja Mikhailovich, recently honored for his services by being appointed Minister of War in the Yugoslav government. This force has scored repeated successes against the Axis armies of occupation. It now appears that Hitler has given up hope of wiping out the resistance of these bold fighters, at least during the winter months, and has withdrawn his troops to the larger cities. Reports from Turkey in the New York *Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor* speak of strong pressure being put on Hungary and Bulgaria by Berlin with a view to using their armies to accomplish the costly task of "pacification" which has baffled the Reichswehr. Neither one of these puppet states seems very enthusiastic. Recently Hungary has received visits from both von Ribbentrop and Count Ciano. The former is said to have proposed that the whole Hungarian army should be placed at the disposal of the German High Command, that Hungary should supply more food to Germany, and that German troops from Russia should be allowed to take up winter quarters in Hungary. As a sweetener for this program the Nazi Foreign Minister offered southern Transylvania, which is now in Rumanian hands. Even von Ribbentrop is said to have been embarrassed when Premier Bardossy produced documentary proof that Germany had recently promised Rumania sections of Transylvania assigned to Hungary by the Vienna award. Nevertheless, he was able to insist on the acceptance of part of his demands, including that for more food, although the Hungarian population is becoming increasingly restive because of the shortage of supplies. Swiss sources report that one Hungarian and three Bulgarian army divisions have now entered Serbia to undertake "police duties."

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THE AXIS GENERAL SITUATION SEEMS TO BE going from bad to worse. Field Marshal Walther von Reichenau is now reported to have succumbed to poor health. Berlin says that he died of apoplexy; Moscow insists that the Gestapo nursed him in his last hours and that Dr. Hitler was the attending physician. Moscow reports further that Marshal Wilhelm Keitel "suddenly has fallen ill." Stockholm estimates that altogether some twenty Nazi generals have been confined—victims of an epidemic which began somewhere west of Moscow early in December. In Berne the Berlin correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* reports that "many high-ranking German officers on the Russian front have fallen sick because even at their headquarters there is a general lack of comfort." We don't doubt it. Meanwhile Great Britain reports that its collection of Italian generals in the African theater has reached the operatic total of seventy-nine—which reminds us rather irresponsibly of that well-known musical phrase, "Repeat ad Libya."

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PLANS FOR COMPENSATING WORKERS thrown out of their jobs by the all-out war-production program were drawn up last week at a White House conference of Administration and Congressional leaders. Although details of the legislation remain to be ironed out, the plans call for reimbursing the unemployed workers at a rate of 60 per cent of their normal wages up to a maximum of $24 a week, provided they use their time training for jobs in the war industries. Since most state unemployment funds pay only 50 per cent of wages up to a maximum of $15 or $18 a week, and that only for fifteen or sixteen weeks, the new scheme will require federal financing. The President has approved of an appropriation of $300,000,000 for this purpose, but doubts have been expressed that this sum will be sufficient to provide for an estimated total of over 4,000,000 unemployed. While there will be some hardship despite these plans, the forehandedness shown in drawing up these proposals contrasts most favorably with the dilatory manner with which Congress met the vastly greater problem of unemployment during the depression.

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ONE NEED NOT BELIEVE EVERY DETAIL OF this week's John L. Lewis story to be pretty sure that Honest John is cooking up a new sensation for labor—object: a return to power. Opinions vary considerably as to whether Mr. Lewis, as reported in the New York *Times* of January 19, conducted unauthorized negotiations for an A. F. of L.–C. I. O. merger, with George Meany to be president, Lewis vice-president, and Philip Murray, much to Murray's surprise, secretary-treasurer. Some labor leaders think, or profess to think, that the story was spun out of the finest gossamer; others believe it follows the general pattern of the Lewis ambitions and is at least a trial balloon. Still others consider the release of the story—supposedly by Meany's office and with Lewis's knowledge—a brilliant tactical move, combining advance propaganda for the scheme with a subtle variety of blackmail. According to this theory, whether or not Lewis actually conducted secret negotiations—he is reliably reported to have tried Hutcheson and Tobin before striking it lucky with Matthew Woll—he emerges before the public as the champion of unity, while those who denounce his alleged maneuvering stand revealed as opponents of what many a Gallup poll will tell you is an extremely popular objective of the American people. For all its shrewdness, however, it is improbable that the Lewis plan, if any, can be put into effect. Mr. Murray, while explaining for the record that he considers the stories of Lewis's underground dickering "a lot of newspaper bunk," has made it clear that peace between the two organizations can only come "in a democratic way," that is, without benefit of those delicate services of John L. Lewis which would enable him to pick his ticket.

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THE WAR DEPARTMENT'S PROJECT FOR AN army of 3,600,000 men by the end of 1942 illustrates the value of advance planning. In the last war the army did not reach this size until nearly a year and a half after our entry into the conflict. Although the plans for mobilization which were worked out during the years of peace have not been followed in any exact sense, they have served as a yardstick for the present program. In every case, however, the M-Day plan is to be accelerated. Particular attention is being given to the expansion of the air corps. To make this possible the educational requirements for pilots are being relaxed, and the lower age limit for applicants is to be reduced from twenty to eighteen. It is estimated that this will create a reservoir of 2,000,000 additional young men eligible as candidates. Although details of the army's program have been kept secret for obvious reasons, its general outlines appear to be sound. That an immediate expansion is called for can hardly be disputed. Whether it will be wise to expand it beyond the 3,600,000 mark in view of the demands for war materials to fill our own and lend-lease requirements is a question which can only be decided by the course of the war. Obviously, increasing care must be shown by the local draft boards to avoid calling up men who can best serve their country in factories or in technical capacities.

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STEEL PLANTS IN THE YOUNGSTOWN AREA were operating last week at only 84 per cent of capacity, the lowest rate in eighteen months. This was not because of any slackening of demand—there are customers waiting for every ton of steel that can be turned out—but for

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lack of sufficient scrap metal to feed the furnaces. Other leading steel districts are also reporting falls in production for the same reason. Mill stocks of scrap are steadily declining as consumption keeps ahead of new deliveries, and there seems a strong probability that further reductions in steel output will occur in the coming weeks. OPM officials are scurrying around trying to move supplies from the scrap dealers' yards to fill the most urgent needs. They are also reported to be taking an inventory of scrap in the automobile graveyards, which it is believed are capable of producing a good deal of additional material. The difficulty here, however, is that car junk dealers are more interested in selling spare parts than in reducing body-work to scrap and are inclined to hold out for higher prices. Consequently there is now some talk about requisition. Little or nothing apparently is being done by the OPM Bureau of Industrial Conservation to engage more public interest and cooperation in locating and collecting supplies from normally neglected sources on the lines suggested by Keith Hutchison in *The Nation* of December 27, 1941. A letter from the Hessian Hills School in our last issue suggested what could be accomplished even by small groups in small communities. In Georgia the Department of Education has just inaugurated a state-wide scheme for the collection through the schools of waste materials of all kinds. If Washington would only supply a little stimulation and direction, similar efforts would no doubt be made throughout the country.

The Truman Report

THERE are only a few matters in the report of 288 pages submitted by the Truman committee with which our readers are not already familiar. The committee's findings in respect to the fumbled planning of aluminum, steel, and copper expansion, the failure earlier to mobilize the automobile industry for war, the cold shouldering of small business in the defense program, the dangerously dual position occupied by the dollar-a-year men, the scandalous handling of amortization privileges, and the War Department's sloppy supervision of camp construction—all have been discussed in our pages and in our Washington correspondence. The report is in many respects confirmation of disclosures first made in *The Nation*. In other fields we are ourselves indebted to the committee for first insights into outstanding flaws in the arms program.

Of the new material in the report perhaps the most striking and the most disturbing is that dealing with aviation.

> Apparently [the committee says] there has never been and is not now any real planned and coordinated program for the production of aircraft. Our services have merely purchased what the manufacturers had to offer instead of planning to use available facilities to produce what they needed at maximum capacity. Though it was seemingly created to organize and manage production facilities, it appears that as far as aviation production is concerned, the Office of Production Management simply acted as a rubber stamp for the service agencies, allowing them to follow their own policies of procurement.

The committee reports a shortage of planes so acute as to hurt the morale of our pilots.

> It may be claimed that this shortage existing with our own forces comes as a result of huge shipments diverted to foreign consumers. Actually, the facts do not indicate that to be the case. Information made available to the public has shown that of the best types, our shipments abroad have been very limited.

The report also tells in full for the first time the story of the Bethlehem Steel contract being negotiated by Jesse Jones, a contract worse, if anything, than that with Alcoa. It tells the full story of the Wolf Creek Ordnance Plant, and of the carelessness of the War Department in supervising it. It tells of the exorbitant profits being made in the shipyards and of the navy's failure—perhaps intentional—to keep the books of its own yards in such shape that they can be used as a yardstick with which to measure costs in the private yards.

We are sorry that the Truman committee lacked the courage to say in public what many of its members have said in private of Jesse Jones, Knudsen, and Stettinius. We are sorry to see its weak acquiescence in proposals to revise the tax-amortization law to make it easier to fleece the government. We are sorry to note that while "pulling its punches" on the principal malefactors in business and the dollar-a-year men, the committee exaggerated the bad effects of strikes on the defense program. It said that strikes cost defense 26,000,000 man-days of labor, but this is the figure for time lost in all industry. The OPM figure for time lost in defense industries is 2,500,000 man-days, less than a tenth of the figure used by the committee. We note, too, the contrast between the vague recommendations in this somewhat hastily put together report and the far-sighted program of the Tolan committee.

Nevertheless, after all these criticisms have been made, the fact remains that the country is deeply indebted to Senator Truman and his colleagues. Mead and Wallgren deserve special mention with the chairman, and even the conservatives like Brewster, Ball, and Connally showed a vigorous readiness to probe the shortcomings of business men that does them honor. The committee has already paid back many times over the meager $40,000 it had to spend. The revisions which have taken place in aluminum, steel, and shipbuilding contracts as a result of its

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revelations are worth several millions of dollars. It focused attention on the worst abuses in the arms program, and an advance copy of its report and a conference between the President and Senator Truman preceded the current reorganization of defense.

In England the Select Committee on National Expenditure of the House of Commons has made extensive and continuous investigations of arms expenditures straight through the war. We need such inquiries here. As censorship closes down on the facts and begins to shield incompetence in office, the people and the press will become more and more dependent on Congress for knowledge of what is going on in arms production. *The Nation* would like to see the Truman committee's life extended "for the duration," with an ample budget. An expenditure of $250,000 a year on the committee would yield many times that amount in the correction of extravagance and the disclosure of corruption.

The East Is Vital

EACH week that passes brings home more clearly the shocking unpreparedness of both the United States and Great Britain in the Pacific. It is now admitted, for example—some six weeks after the opening of the war—that no reinforcements were ever sent to the Philippines. Nor do any substantial number of Americans appear to have been sent anywhere else—to Singapore, the East Indies, or Australia. Some planes have been getting through, but in small numbers. The British record, as Donald W. Mitchell shows elsewhere in this issue, is fully as bad. London is reported to be restive not only because of the strategic effect of the defeats but to an even greater degree because of the blow which British prestige has suffered throughout the Far East. Australia is bitter over what it considers Britain's tendency to minimize the East in its strategic plans.

Under these circumstances Secretary Knox's statement on the importance of keeping our eyes on Hitler as the No. 1 enemy was singularly unfortunate in its timing. Despite the recent Nazi reverses in Russia, no one will care to deny that Germany is the most powerful member of the Axis. In the long run it will probably prove the most difficult to conquer. But war is indivisible, and a setback on one front is bound to have unfavorable effects on the others. The loss of Russia, with its huge manufacturing capacity and rich stores of raw materials, would of course be disastrous for the Allies. But it would be hardly more so than the loss of East Asia, with its incredible wealth in rubber, tin, oil, and various tropical products.

Loss of this storehouse of strategic materials, moreover, might prove less serious in the long run than the disillusionment of millions of our allies, real and potential, throughout the East. The Chinese, particularly, have been seriously disturbed by our conduct of the war and Secretary Knox's disparaging comments on the importance of the Eastern front. Several Chungking newspapers have expressed apprehension regarding the apparent trend of Allied strategy. Sun Fo, chairman of the legislative Yuan and son of the founder of the Chinese Republic, went so far as to question the wisdom of China continuing to fight "if the United States and Britain intend to allow Japan a free rein in the Far East while they are finishing off Hitler." If the Chinese, relatively strong in their present defensive position, feel thus let down, what of the Filipinos, the Malays, and the inhabitants of the Dutch East Indies, who are being left to bear the brunt of Japanese imperialism? Will these peoples ever again have confidence in American and British promises of support? Or may we expect to see other native leaders following the example of the Thai military clique or of Premier U Saw of Burma? It is not to be supposed that U Saw, who has been detained by the British on charges of having communicated with the enemy, has any illusions about the Japanese proffers of friendship. But he must have enough doubts regarding British strength to have considered it advisable to play both sides of the game.

Secretary Knox's argument that once we have disposed of Hitler we shall have little difficulty with Japan is plausible so far as it goes. But it could also be argued that we should smash Japan first, as the weaker member of the Axis—after which we would have vastly greater resources to turn against Germany. From the standpoint of practical military strategy this plan has at least several advantages over that advanced by Mr. Knox. In the first place, it would be comparatively easy for us to amass overwhelming military superiority in the Far East, but there is no hope of achieving this in Europe during the present year. Secondly, there is no convenient way in which the United States can immediately throw its immense resources against Germany. The only fronts on which Germany is now fighting are in Russia and Africa —where American supplies rather than man-power are needed. While we dare not cut off this flow of supplies or relax our efforts in the Battle of the Atlantic, we should have enough resources left for offensive operations in the East. The position of the Soviet Union also plays an important part in the picture. We cannot readily send an expeditionary force to Russia, but defeat of Japan would release Russia's huge Far Eastern army for use against Germany.

As has already been indicated, we do not wish to minimize the importance of Hitler as the chief threat to American security. But at the moment Hitler is being held in check on all the chief fronts where he is fighting. On the other hand, our failures in the East show rather clearly that the importance of this sector has been

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underestimated. Any steps now being taken to remedy the situation are of course military secrets. But the events of the last fortnight demonstrate that adequate steps were not taken either before the outbreak of war or in the early days of the conflict. It is difficult, therefore, to have confidence that the East is getting its full share of attention today.

Free and So-called Free

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

THIS isn't a dissertation on the State Department. I'm tired of the subject. If a word or two about the vagaries of Hull's bad boys creeps into these lines, it's a typographical error. This article is going to deal with movements, free and so-called free, and how they should behave. Never a word about the State Department. Or hardly ever.

When Adolf Berle wrote the strange composition on free movements put out by the department right after we got into the war—remember, the one saying that in general free movements weren't officially considered in the best of taste and perhaps American citizens had better steer clear of them—a lot of confusion was created in the minds of people who had thought we were fighting Hitler for the preservation of freedom or the restoration of freedom or something like that. The confusion wasn't cleared up by the opposition of the department to the freeing of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon by the Free French. People began to wonder: Are we against Hitler and his puppets or are we against the people who are fighting him? A question like that is disturbing in war time. People like to know whom they're shooting at and why.

Well, some of the officials in Washington evidently decided that something ought to be done to unscramble people's minds. Who they were I don't know, but I suspect the President and a few other liberals and nonconformists. They believed that it would not advance the Allied cause to have every anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist in every country of the world asking himself and his friends why the United States, which had just plunged into the war against Hitler and Japan, should be run by officials who dislike and distrust anti-Nazis and anti-Fascists, especially organized ones. So when the inter-Allied pact—the anti-Axis pact—was drawn up during Mr. Roosevelt's and Mr. Churchill's talks in Washington, it was announced that in addition to the original twenty-six signing nations, the United Nations would welcome statements of adherence from "appropriate authorities which are not governments."

This was a shrewd gesture and it worked fairly well. No sooner did the word go out than the line of appropriate authorities formed both on the right and the left. Free groups old and new, so-called and genuine, hurried to Washington to declare their adherence to the pact. Whether this signatorial get-together had any beneficial effect on democratic opinion in Paris and Delhi and Buenos Aires, I don't know. It proved at least that some people in Washington recognized the necessity of placating that opinion, if only verbally and symbolically. But I must confess that I wish the gesture hadn't worked so well. I wish the democratic groups had shown a little more skepticism and restraint and had asked for at least a crumb of substance to back up the broad, sweeping promises of freedom—like a dollar paid down to bind a contract. Only a few of them hesitated or ignored the invitation.

This was natural enough. The free movements long for support and acceptance. Most of them, as Mr. Berle's composition indicated, live under the shadow of official disapproval. And since those that do can work for their cause in the United States only by sufferance of the government, they are inclined to respond to even the most evanescent gestures of good-will. There were other motives at work, too. Lively competition exists between organizations representing different tendencies in the various national groups. And each one wants to be among those present when the roll is called up yonder at the Peace Conference. Take Hungary as a rather typical example. Democratic Hungarians in the United States have formed a federation headed by such proved believers in freedom as Rustem Vambery and Ladislas de Fenyes. They have met with representatives of the other states of Eastern Europe to lay plans for a post-war democratic federation and for the basic economic changes on which ultimate peace in that part of the world must rest. But another "free Hungarian" movement has been launched by Tibor de Eckhardt, spokesman of Hungary's landowning aristocracy, anti-Semite, reactionary, and, at a date not far enough in the past to be forgotten, active participant in the Horthy white terror. The first group has been trying patiently to lay before the authorities in Washington the elements of a democratic reconstruction of the Danube Basin. Mr. de Eckhardt, however, has the jump on the democrats. His "free Hungary" movement has been approved by the State Department—definitely and unequivocally. All the more reason why the democratic federation should want Hungary's adherence to the pact registered under its name also and not left to Eckhardt. Thus competition hastens the accumulation of signatures, and freedom finds new and strange names among its sponsors.

The plan to invite adherence from these varied groups may have been innocently conceived as an encouragement to forces that have been ignored and rebuffed. I think it was. But it has tended to create a pleasant fiction which is likely to draw attention away from a nasty fact. And I believe that the genuine democratic groups among

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the European émigrés would have been wise to withhold their signatures from a pact of freedom until the recognition of freedom becomes part of the policy of the United States government.

The Free French have done so. To their credit they have taken the position that they must be accepted as one of the fighting allies before they sign the pact. They are not interested in helping to wipe out the evil effects of the State Department's blunder. They are not hurrying to accept unspoken apologies for unrevoked insults. They are waiting for Washington's attitude to become clarified and defined. By holding aloof they have greatly enhanced their prestige and dignity.

I wish the other genuine free movements had exercised the same restraint. The process of clarification would have been much accelerated if free Spaniards and Austrians and Hungarians and assorted anti-Nazi Germans had bided their time until Mr. Berle and his colleagues had made up their minds whether they want a post-war Europe dominated by Eckhardt and Otto, Pétain and Franco, and other similar crusaders for freedom, or whether they want democrats.

Can Nelson Deliver?

BY I. F. STONE

Washington, January 17

I CAME back from the Midwest feeling very optimistic. Some of the optimism has worn off in Washington. To tour the plants of the automobile industry, to see their marvelous organization, to talk with the production men in charge of them and with automobile labor and its leaders, is immensely to increase one's confidence in America's fighting power. The business men one encounters in the factory make a very different impression from the business men one sees dollar-a-yearing in Washington: the man in charge of the gear-grinding is not at all like the man with an ax to grind.

The production men and the engineers of the automobile industry command one's respect. They know their business, and the spirit they show now is quite different from the spirit of a year ago. When I was in the Midwest last year to get the story of the Reuther plan I found automotive executives engaged in long theoretical arguments to prove that their plants, with the exception of possibly 10 or 15 per cent of their machinery, could turn out automobiles only. Today, with automobile production about to be finally curtailed, they are buckling down to the task of finding other uses for their machines in making arms.

I visited many small parts plants, as well as the Studebaker factory in South Bend and Ford's River Rouge plant in Detroit. After looking at many of the machines and asking many questions of the engineers and production men who took me around, I was convinced that there are few machines in an automobile plant which cannot be put to other purposes. When one gets down to it, it is hard to find any special-purpose machine for which some other use cannot be found. The only special-purpose machine, in an absolute sense, is the automobile factory itself. It is the arrangement of the machines, the pacing of the inspections, the flow of the materials, the timing of the labor that make the plant so wonderful an instrument for turning out motor cars.

Once automobile production is stopped, one has a collection of machines which can smooth, grind, mill, or bore parts for a plane, a tank, or a gun. New attachments must be made—new tools, dies, jigs, or fixtures—and new production and assembly lines must be planned, but the old machines need not stand idle till automobile production is resumed. Plans already being made contrast sharply with the 10 to 15 per cent estimates still current among the automotive dollar-a-year men. A Ford engineer preparing to make a new tank engine four or five times the size of the comparable engine formerly produced in his plant showed me his machine-tool requirements. Eighty per cent of them will be met by retooling existing machinery in Ford production lines.

Only a tank factory can turn out a whole tank and only a plane factory can turn out a whole plane, but any factory equipped to do metal work, whether automotive or otherwise, can turn out parts for planes, tanks, and other kinds of armament. Ordinary methods of procurement, however, are nowhere near sufficient for the task of mobilizing this widespread machine-tool equipment for the arms program. What we need is over-all production boards, here for a whole industry, there for a whole city or a whole busy river valley, which can break down blueprints for tanks, planes, and guns and parcel them out in accordance with the capacity of each individual plant. This job of reorganizing industry for arms production is a jigsaw puzzle—the larger the number of pieces the more combinations become possible. We need a production board which can move an idle drill press from Kenosha to complete a new gun-part production line in Chicago, and find the machines needed at South Bend in a machine shop at Flint.

We need the present management men for their ex-

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perience, their ingenuity, their engineering genius. We also need labor on these boards, for three reasons: first, to get those simple, obvious ideas—like the ones embodied in the Reuther plan for automobiles and the Murray plan for steel—which do not occur to management because they run counter to management's interests; secondly, as a means of siphoning up from the man at the bench the suggestions and complaints which can do so much to improve efficiency; thirdly, in order to inspire labor to greater effort by making it a partner in production. I am not suggesting debating societies for each industrial area—every board must have a government chairman empowered to make final decisions. But even in ordinary business an executive can benefit by listening to his workmen, as well as his engineers, before he makes up his mind. No enterprise can be run by soliloquy.

I had hoped to see some such scheme emerge from the industry conversion conferences, though the first one in Detroit last Wednesday ended with nothing more than an agreement on what nine points were to be discussed at the next meeting. Automotive executives are worried over talk of labor participation in management. The automobile workers' union is a glacial force which has already transformed a citadel of the open shop into the union town that is Detroit. Management is afraid labor may win this battle, too. But it has been afraid in the past of many other things which have since proved less than disastrous. Management fought seniority as disruptive of efficiency, but has since found it profitable. Seniority has required the training of men to handle more than one job, has given the manufacturer a much better-trained and more flexible labor force. Labor participation in management may some day prove as profitable on the books of business as on those of society.

Before we win this war, we shall have to turn to great industrial pools and to labor representation on the boards controlling them. There is no other way to obtain the full mobilization of capacity and enthusiasm needed to overtake the Axis. It is in this perspective that the new war-production shake-up in Washington seems but a first step in the organization of industry for maximum arms output. The centralization of authority in one man was necessary, but equally necessary is the creation of new supporting organizations, by industries and areas, to bring about wider participation of both men and machines in the war effort.

Donald Nelson is an able and progressive business man, but it remains to be seen whether or not he can do the job and how far the President will support him in it. As Director of Purchases in the old NDAC, Nelson had to deal with consumer-goods industries—textiles and shoes—in which output is more than ample for any army. That is quite a different task from the one before him now, in which he must deal with the monopolistic heavy industries and with the job of converting industries like automotives and radio to war production. Even in the smaller job as Director of Purchases, Nelson was not always successful in impressing his own ideas on his dollar-a-year subordinates. There was some scandalous ax-grinding, and the prices paid were often exorbitant.

In the past Nelson has not been much of a fighter, though the reorganization was itself the result of an undercover fight in which Nelson was partly a leader, partly a convenient rallying point. His problem is an enormous one, for no organization can be reformed merely by changing the men at the top. Patterson in the War Department and Forrestal in the Navy have both learned a good deal in Washington, but neither has been too successful in changing the methods of the procurement officers under them. Nelson and Knudsen do not get along. Nelson has long been critical of Knudsen and the automobile industry. Will Knudsen's job of Director of Production in the War Department be that of a mere figurehead—as Nelson hopes and has been given reason to believe? Or will the "Lieutenant General" be in full charge of army production and procurement—as the White House statement on the new setup would lead one to conclude?

The War Production Board itself is merely a new name for much the same cast of characters that has been running defense straight through the shifts from NDAC to OPM to SPAB. Under the executive order the board's power would seem to be chiefly advisory. The strongest characters on it are Jesse Jones and Knudsen, in that order. None of the New Dealers on it are fighters. Will Nelson be able to keep the board in its place and outfrown Jones and Knudsen when it meets? He can give orders to Jones on the financing of plant expansion, but so can the President. How far will Jones, who often flouts Roosevelt's wishes, obey Nelson's?

So long as the actual placing of the contracts lies with army-navy procurement officers, it will be hard for Nelson to get new ideas across, to adopt new methods of procurement. He may find it easier to veto army-navy plans than to force them to operate in accordance with his ideas. What are his ideas? How far is he prepared to abandon ordinary buy-and-sell methods of procurement for the virtual organization of production itself under government auspices? I should say that he is beginning to see the need for a new approach, but the question is whether officials whom he cannot hire and fire will obey him. Will he fight to take over the supply services? Or will he put "his own men" into the army-navy procurement? Many of these men are dollar-a-year men hostile to new ideas that disturb ordinary business methods. If he puts them into army-navy procurement, will he be taking over the army and navy supply services or will they be taking him over? The probability is that he will try the method of "infiltration. It remains to be seen how successful it will be.

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How to Lose the War

BY DONALD W. MITCHELL

THE war in the Pacific has thus far brought nothing but defeats to the United Nations. Pearl Harbor, the sinking of the Repulse and Prince of Wales, the capture of Hongkong, the occupation of the Philippines, the sucessful campaign in Malaya, the penetration of the British and Netherlands Indies, the loss of tin and rubber resources vital to American defense—all these blows have fallen in a period of less than two months. Upon our understanding of what has happened and why it has happened and the avoidance of further blunders the final outcome of the war may depend.

Japan's initial strategy of striking a surprise blow preceding the declaration of war and then launching rapid attacks against its superior but divided opponents is exactly the same in its essentials as that which enabled it to win the war against Russia. Many persons laughed off Russia's defeat in that war as the result of inefficiency and corruption; yet the United States and Great Britain are not even faring as well as did the Russians. Nor can the Allies legitimately plead Japanese bad faith as the cause of their misfortunes. In twentieth-century warfare surprise attacks are merely good strategy. No war of modern times has been so long and persistently predicted as one between Japan and this country. Yet no heed was given to the presence of Japanese warships in the mid-Pacific or to the warnings of the Secretary of State.

The surprising successes at Pearl Harbor and in the Far East assured Japan what it needed—complete sea and air dominance in the vital theater of operations. Its achievement of this end was greatly aided by the enemy's failure to have sufficient forces in the crucial areas to make it pay a heavy price for every military gain. The persistent falsehoods with which the British have tried to disguise their inadequate preparations in Malaya have fooled only themselves and their allies. Division of the United States navy between the Atlantic and the Pacific, carried out in the summer of 1941 against expert naval advice, made the Pacific fleet, even before the disaster at Pearl Harbor, inadequate to undertake the rapid offensive needed to safeguard the Far East. The planes which should have caused the Japanese thousands of casualties in their attack on the Philippines were sent elsewhere. Yet it is still too early to pronounce those decisions mistakes. The air power sorely missed from the Philippines aided the British in Libya, and American naval aid in the North Atlantic may have staved off defeat by submarines. In the Pacific, however, these diversions made Japan's task infinitely easier.

It would probably be unjust to dwell on the mere extent of Allied losses. Guam, Hongkong, and Wake were written off in advance. Theodore Roosevelt forty years ago termed the Philippines the "Achilles heel of American defense" and, regarding them as indefensible, issued preliminary orders for the evacuation of the Asiatic fleet in the event of war with Japan.

Not the fact of losses but the manner in which they were incurred should cause profound dissatisfaction to every citizen of the British Empire and the United States. For these early defeats have been accompanied by a succession of national, administrative, and purely strategical mistakes on the part of the Allied powers. All the Allies except the Dutch must plead guilty to the cardinal sin of underestimating the opponent. Stories of Japan's economic weakness were repeated and exaggerated out of all proportion to the facts. Its army and air force were ridiculed, and the idea that it could fight a power of the size and strength of the United States was made to seem preposterous. Americans appeared to be—some still are—drifting in a world of fantasy untouched by the harsh reality of war.

The British were evidently even less troubled by facts. The commanders in Malaya failed in preliminary planning and felt confident that the Japs were bluffing—making exactly the same mistake that anti-Axis pacifists committed for years prior to 1939. Now that uncensored eyewitness accounts of the fighting in Malaya are reaching us, it is becoming increasingly and painfully obvious that the earlier commanders at Singapore were not the flower of the British army. Realization is wanting that this is a war which we can lose and are losing at present.

With the underestimation of Japan there existed—and may still exist—a fundamental error of strategy. Wars are won only by offensive action, and yet our plans for defeating Japan in the Pacific, as drawn up by the Joint Board of the Army and Navy after July, 1941, contemplated defense of Malaya and Siberia, economic blockade, bombing raids, aid to China—all essentially defensive measures or strokes of attrition. The Japanese upset this "Maginot Line" psychology in exactly the way Hitler beat France—by an attack not covered by the calculations. Unless the Allies rid themselves instantly and completely of this defensive concept of warfare they may well lose the war in the Pacific, for Japan's weaknesses—its lack of economic resources and its attenuated lines of communication—will not operate to bring about its

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defeat unless they are exploited by strong opponents.

The basic error of strategy has been accompanied by colossal military mistakes. Evidently neither the far-flung submarine patrol near enemy harbors nor the army and navy intelligence service had any advance information, though Japanese warships had maneuvered near Pacific islands for weeks. The menace of fifth-column work, to which Hawaii by reason of its population is particularly subject, was likewise neglected. Yet even with these failures, distant aerial naval patrols, reconnaissance by surface vessels operating nearer to home bases, close aerial patrol by the army, inshore surface patrol by small craft, and finally the army's air-raid detectors should all have afforded warning of an approaching attack. Not even the elementary routine precautions of torpedo nets about anchored ships or of camouflage and decentralization of the air force were employed. Fuel dumps supposedly sunk in rock protection deep underground burst into flames at the first bomb. This much is clear from the facts of attack. Further investigation will uncover more.

Elsewhere than at Pearl Harbor Allied mistakes have been less concentrated. In Malaya the British have been repeatedly caught napping by the extreme adaptability and trickiness of their Japanese opponents. Their "scorched earth" policy has been a ghastly farce. Huge supplies of tin, rice, and rubber have been allowed to fall undamaged into Japanese hands. Bridges, tugs, and docks have not been rendered useless. Even a radio station was left intact for the use of the ready Japanese propagandists.

Much of the American poor showing in the Philippines has been due to indecision about whether the islands should be defended or evacuated, which left us prepared to do neither. Had there been a sufficient air force to attack invaders, the transports that came into Lingayen Gulf at night would have been an easy target. Loss of the Philippines was expected, but so quick and easy a Japanese victory was not.

Given the blunders in strategy, the lack of adequate forces, and the obvious ineptitude of various Allied commanders, the deeds of the average sailor, soldier, marine, and airman have been heroic. The defense of Wake has already taken rank as a service classic. But though Americans have fought ably and well, the complacency of many civilians and the mistakes of some of the higher officers in the services have been a discouraging feature of American participation in total war. We should frankly face and recognize these blunders. To continue them may be fatal.

The Limits of Liberty

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR

THE question of civil liberties in war time has divided liberals and progressives today into two groups—"absolutists" and "relativists." The absolutists, thinking in terms of absolute rights, refuse to countenance any restriction of liberty of expression, and are inclined to hold to their position without regard to the political consequences which may flow from it. The relativists insist that freedom of speech should be withheld from those political groups which intend to destroy liberty.

As one who is in broad agreement with the relativist position in the matter of freedom, as upon every other social and political right or principle, I should like to outline a position which, while it does not agree with that of the absolutists, represents a modification of the views of the relativists.

The idea that freedom of speech is an absolute right, inherent in "natural law," which we cannot abridge without destroying it *in toto* comes to us from eighteenth-century thought. The eighteenth century appropriated and reinterpreted conceptions of "natural law" originally elaborated by Stoicism and later incorporated into medieval Christianity. "Natural law" is a law of reason and supposedly gives us absolutely authoritative moral and social norms and "inalienable" rights. In a sense theories of natural law refute each other because each generation, or at least each culture, believes that the natural law embodies different specific norms. Everything from liberty and equality to property, the obedience of children, and the prohibition of contraceptives has been regarded at various times as a requirement of natural law.

The Stoics and the medievalists were wiser than the eighteenth century at least in this, that they regarded liberty and equality as requirements of the absolute, but not of the relative, natural law. This is to say they believed liberty and equality—equality representing ideal justice—to be ultimate but not immediate social norms. Neither one can be fully realized in the complexities of actual history, if for no other reason than that they come into conflict with each other. Eighteenth-century nationalists disregarded this wise reservation of Stoic and Catholic thought and made liberty an absolute norm and freedom of expression an absolute right.

The difficulty with this conception is that man requires

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community as much as liberty, and he has never been able to achieve community in large units of social cohesion without an element of coercion. Since both liberty and community are basic requirements, libertarian social theories which are founded on the assumption that liberty is the basic requirement of man's nature are just as erroneous and just as dangerous as the opposite theories which maintain that liberty must be completely subordinated to the requirements of community and social cohesion. Nor can we maintain that the individual requires liberty and that society requires cohesion. Both the individual and society need both in order to express their true nature and fulfil their proper function.

The relativists are just as correct in resisting those absolutists who would make liberty an absolute right as in resisting those who would make peace, as against war, an absolute social norm and who are easily betrayed by this dogmatism into the false peace of capitulation to tyranny. But the relativists are wrong if they imagine that liberty should be denied only, and always, to those groups which do not believe in liberty. They are wrong first of all because they have by implication adopted their opponents' conception of democracy. Democracy does not consist merely in the preservation of liberty. Democracy is a social and political form which preserves unity in terms of liberty; and since no democracy has ever achieved unity without some measure of coercion, no democracy has ever maintained pure liberty.

It might be just as dangerous to allow anarchist sects to spread their propaganda in a time of emergency as to allow totalitarian sects to do so. We ought not to define our problem merely in terms of immediate exigencies. We do not happen to be threatened by anarchist sects, but no one can deny that libertarian philosophies have, in recent years, seriously impaired the unity and striking power of the democracies in their battle for existence with tyrannies. They have brought confusion into our counsels by defining every coercive act of government—the Conscription Act, for instance—as "fascist." It is possible, furthermore, that a national community might be seriously threatened in an emergency by groups which did not question the basic creed of democracy but merely took a defeatist attitude toward the political and military situation.

If the relativists should achieve a more complete relativism in evaluating the various "rights" in a social situation, they would, paradoxically, be able to find a larger area of agreement with the libertarian absolutists than they have found thus far. A relativist position which could support the libertarian position in so far as the latter makes a genuine contribution to democracy but which would have to challenge its absolute dogma would analyze the democratic problem about as follows: The democratic norm is the largest measure of unity together with the largest possible measure of freedom. A time of emergency—that is, a time when the community is threatened by internal or external peril—requires closer social cohesion than an ordinary period. This greater unity is partly achieved by voluntary efforts based on emotions prompted by a common danger. But it is not completely achieved by purely voluntary efforts. There must actually be a greater measure of coercion, partly to eliminate recalcitrant and even traitorous elements and partly to save time, for a community must act quickly in an emergency.

Against the absolutists, the relativists must insist that it is not possible to lay down absolute principles about the preservation of liberty. The degree of liberty which we can maintain depends upon the intensity and extent of an emergency and the degree of unity achieved by purely voluntary efforts. Britain, for instance, can afford to preserve liberties to a greater degree than some other democracies because various traditional and other resources give this nation a unity in an emergency which has been the envy and despair of other nations.

The relativists must also insist that no such sharp line can be drawn between freedom of speech and freedom of action as the absolutists draw. However, it is frequently necessary to draw a line between the freedom of speech of a private individual, which ought not to be abridged at all in a democracy, and the freedom of organizations to spread subversive propaganda, which may have to be restricted. Hitler was not merely speaking but acting when he corrupted the youth of his nation with his lies. The restriction of his liberty to do this would not necessarily have saved Germany, since his propaganda both aggravated and expressed a sickness in German society. The sickness of a society cannot be cured merely by coercive unity; but it may be important to prevent a social disease from spreading while society seeks to find the real cure for its ills.

Relativists can agree with libertarian absolutists that all societies tend, particularly in times of crisis, to apply coercive remedies for their ills too precipitately. Relativists can join with absolutists in resisting those forms of coercion which have nothing to do with prudent statesmanship but are merely the tools of a fanatical tribalism, striking out venomously against that which is "alien." Such resistance is particularly to be desired in the present war, in which loyalties are determined not primarily by racial but by ideological differences, and in which the appeasers of yesterday will be inclined today to persecute aliens who fought Hitler long before they did.

The relativists will also make common cause with the absolutists whenever they remind the nation that coercive means of unity can never be more than an alloy in the amalgam of social peace. If the coercive alloy becomes too important, democracy is imperiled. The relativists can furthermore join the absolutists in reminding the

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community that every bureaucracy seeks to discourage criticism of its own mistakes by interpreting it as criticism of democracy itself. Freedom of criticism is necessary for maintaining the efficiency of a democracy. Every restriction upon freedom of speech must therefore be carefully scrutinized and grudgingly granted.

There is a final point on which absolutists and relativists ought to find partial agreement, though it is the point on which their disagreement is most obvious at the present moment. The relativists should insist tnat the right to preach doctrines which challenge the foundations of a democratic society ought not to be abridged unless such a challenge results in a "clear and present" danger. They cannot regard such a right as absolute, and they would not allow a community to be thrown into confusion rather than restrict this right. But they know that the uncoerced consent of a community depends to a large degree upon the prestige which its government enjoys, and that nothing enhances the moral prestige of a state so much as the inner security which allows it to indulge in the "luxury" of permitting criticism of its basic doctrines. A policy of coercion, on the other hand, suggests weakness, and may therefore lead to further disaffections which require further coercive restrictions.

The relativists will, of course, part company with the absolutists at the point where the latter would sacrifice the unity of the community rather than restrict liberty. Any community in a time of crisis will tend to preserve its unity; it will use coercive means as a last resort. If the community is either very sick or very imprudent, it will use too much coercion and become involved in the vicious circle of repression which ends in tyranny. But it is silly to assume that moderate restrictions inevitably end in dictatorship.

Communities may, like individuals, face emergencies and diseases which need not be fatal. To be sick in bed does not doom the patient to stay there until he dies. Coercive means of unity are analogous to the doctor's medication and stimulants. The constant use of a stimulant will not restore a weak heart, but neither will its momentary use necessarily prove fatal. Deeper sources of health must of course be found. The Weimar Republic may have destroyed itself by its doctrinaire libertarianism, though of course the suppression of Hitlerism would not alone have prevented its destruction.

It is important, in other words, to consider all factors in a social situation, and to have a flexibility in tactics which does justice to momentary contingencies while maintaining an inflexibility in strategy which does justice to the basic principles of human society. But loyalty to principle does not mean loyalty to one principle, when human society is governed by more than one principle. No democratic society can survive if it acts upon the assumption that liberty is the only principle of democracy and does not recognize that community has as much value as liberty. The absolutists like to regard the relativists as opportunists who are devoid of principle. But decent relativists merely recognize, as absolutists do not, that life is governed by more than one principle, and that not even the relation of these various principles to one another is fixed. They know that history is full of novel situations and surprises and that a wise statesmanship must know how to do justice both to immediate exigencies and to perennial human needs.

Bavarian Evening

BY TONI CHRISTEN

WHEN the air raids on cities of western Germany became severe, Frau van Druten, widow of a privy counselor and recipient of a generous state pension, went to live at a boarding-house in Tegernsee, Bavaria. Nights spent snugly in bed were better for the health of a lady past seventy than frequent descents into air-raid shelters on cold nights.

Though she missed her furniture and her knick-knacks, she wasn't really homesick for Münster, her home town, for on her first walk through the village she recognized many of the promenaders as people she knew who had left Münster ostensibly to live with married daughters or nieces elsewhere. Settled in furnished rooms or boarding-houses at Rottach or Tegernsee, they continued to enjoy one another's company, play bridge and rummy, and exchange food and clothing acquired outside their ration cards.

There were no bombings in this part of Germany, and Frau van Druten quickly settled down to the pleasant routine. Tegernsee was a popular resort for Germans on furlough from the army, navy, or civilian defense, and this gave you a chance to meet friends or relatives from the four corners of the Reich. It was delightful to rediscover old friends and incidentally get answers to many questions you could not ask in your letters—like whether Cologne bridge and Hamburg harbor were really a shambles, whether Göring was sealed up in Karin Hall, and whether those Bodelschwingh children had been bombed by the enemy or subjected to mercy deaths.

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In August she had the joy of welcoming her nephew Robert and his family from Duisberg. His daughters were pretty and well-behaved, though the un-Aryan curve of their noses, which they inherited from their mother, was a bit embarrassing at times. Robert, a general practitioner, looked—at least during his first vacation days—more as if he were sixty than the forty he was.

They went to the Tegernseer Hof for tea and discussed their friends. "Oh dear, did the Windhorsts really lose their son before Moscow?" And, "Look, Robert, over there by the music stand, at the table by the potted palm; it's lawyer Tannenbaum from Essen. He came here four weeks ago, and at first looked very thin and yellow and jerked his head back and forth. People said he had been in a concentration camp. Do you think he might have Jewish blood? How foolish of him to attempt to win a case against a party official."

She inquired after some Jewish acquaintances in Duisburg and expressed contentment that they had left the country. Not that Frau van Druten was anti-Semitic. Oh, no; her husband had been a liberal and so was she. After the pogrom in the fall of 1938 she had been one of the first to visit her smitten Jewish friends and bring them food and plates to eat from.

Robert and his family stayed for two weeks, then left refreshed for home and new bombing ordeals. Later Gerichtsrat Heine, a friend of the late Herr van Druten, arrived to stay. The Herr Rat, also pensioned and over seventy, called on Frau van Druten every day and asked her to walk with him. Frau van Druten easily forgot her aching ankles while the Herr Rat told juicy stories from the days when he was a judge in a divorce court. Afterward they would stop at a pleasant inn for a cup of acorn coffee and some artificial pastry with three real plums under *Ersatz* whipped cream.

The Herr Rat developed into quite a trusted friend. Once or twice Frau van Druten felt he might become even more than a friend. He had hemmed in an embarrassed way and started a sentence with, "Now, gnädige Frau, I am coming to a rather delicate question." However, each time the delicate question had not been so delicate after all but had been aimed at rather prosaic things: whether Cousin Strombeck had really left a million to his widow when he died last year, and whether at some time of his early life he hadn't been involved in bankruptcy and barred from Münster's fashionable *Verein* for that reason. The Herr Rat had quite distinctly relaxed when he learned that Strombeck had left nearer two millions than one and that the bankruptcy debts had been paid long since. Thereafter he had gone almost out of his way to be nice to Ida Strombeck, who was staying at the pension with them.

In spite of the war and the bombings and the low food and clothing rations people were full of unserious ambitions and interests. Take pretty Ella von Stumm for instance. Frau van Druten saw her at the Tegernseer Hof, the only hotel which offered afternoon tea with music. Ella, who must have arrived just yesterday, was too busy flirting to come and greet Frau van Druten properly. Someone said the man with her owned quite a big country place north of Hanover, with chickens and cows, which had of course their value in these meager times. But Ella, though only twenty-five, had a very nice husband of solid Westphalian stock, doing well, too, with the manufacture of vacuum presses.

Frau van Druten did not like people to be adventurous even in peace time. In war time it was outright indecent; it showed lack of respect for the sacrifices of our heroes at the front. Frau van Druten began to think of her nephew Willy, who was with the army in Russia. Willy, a World War flier and now a colonel in the air force, had been distinguished by the Führer for valor only a few weeks ago. Dear, dear, at times she felt very much in need of seeing him if only to get the idea back that somewhere this war was really happening and that all this discomfort and general vague depression they were experiencing at home was really good for something. Of course, some wounded men were in convalescent homes around Tegernsee, but they were almost well. She guessed they kept the more serious cases nearer the front.

Their Sunday supper was as usual—liverwurst sandwiches and herb tea and Mondamin pudding. Afterward the pension members sat around in their winter coats because the house was showing the November cold. They all felt a bit chill, possibly because they had had so little to eat. (Frau van Druten remembered she still had tucked away a piece of pastry sent to her by mail. It came from her former cook, Elsa, who was married to a Münster *Conditor.*) The Herr Rat saved the situation by suddenly producing a bottle of "Cloister" liqueur—a Benedictine imitation made by the monks in Ettal. Possibly he wanted to be attentive to Ida on her birthday. Ida looked wonderful in her black lace dress from Madame Lölgen's Düsseldorf establishment and her double string of pearls, but she was even sharper tongued than usual, choosing to make the poor old Mosler woman a target of her wit. True, Frau Mosler annoyed them all a bit by bragging about the information she received through her daughter in Switzerland about how the war was really going—that America would come in now any day, and that the German High Command had made a terrible mistake by going into Russia, and that losses before Moscow were beyond conception. Ida picked all her arguments to pieces until the woman got up, quite pale, and left the room.

At just the right moment the doorbell rang. The maid rushed to the door and let in an officer, dazzling in the blue-gray uniform of the air force with the insignia of his colonel's rank shining on his shoulders. It took Frau van Druten some time to realize that this tall, bony,

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weather-beaten stranger was her nephew Willy. What a surprise to see him in Tegernsee all of a sudden!

They crowded around him full of curious questions. Willy, it seemed, had flown to Munich from Reval in twelve hours the day before and taken a car to Tegernsee to see his aunt. He had to be back at the front tomorrow night. He took his aunt's arm and politely guided her away from the group and upstairs to her room. "I have some business to talk over with you, Auntie."

They sat down opposite each other.

"I hope nothing is wrong, Willy," said Frau van Druten somewhat worried. "Is it Egon again?"

It might well be Egon. Willy's only son had been a problem child ever since his mother died. And though he had been sent to fine National Socialist schools he had not improved with the years. He was a snob and lazy and had been thrown out of every school he had ever been sent to. Now he was in a labor camp. He could not be dismissed there—they had to keep him—and he knew it.

Willy shook his head. "No, it isn't Egon. He seems to be all right for the moment."

"I hope the war is going on all right," said Lucy Druten. "Sometimes we hear things."

"Leave that to the Führer," her nephew interrupted her sharply, adding as an afterthought: "Russia is awful—nothing but misery and fear! When you see faces that smile as your friends do here, you can hardly believe your eyes." He had never talked like that before. Lucy Druten looked at him in astonishment.

Willy said after a silence: "I really came to ask your advice, Aunt Lucy. Do you remember Fräulein Emmy from the War Ministry? You met her in Berlin in 1939."

Lucy Druten nodded.

"I never could make up my mind whether to marry her or not; my first marriage wasn't such a success."

No, poor Willy's wife had run off with a Rumanian consul. Fräulein Emmy, Lucy remembered, came of rather modest background and had no dowry, but was sweet and unassuming and terribly in love with Willy, at least she had been at the time when Lucy knew her.

"I suppose she has a lot of character," said Lucy hesitantly. Nowadays, she had heard, people married for character rather than for money, position, or good looks.

"Yes," said Willy without enthusiasm; "her health is rather frail, though. But it isn't that which bothers me so much as her age."

"Her age?" said Aunt Lucy surprised. "I imagine she is a good deal younger than you, in her early thirties, I should say."

"Thirty-two, to be exact," said Willy with a frown. "A girl in the twenties would be easier to train. Anyway, she came to Munich last night to meet me and put the question squarely to me whether I'd marry her or not. What shall I do, Aunt Lucy?"

"Really, Willy," said Frau van Druten, "I'd rather not advise you. When I think of the disappointment your stepmother turned out to be—"

Energetically Willy put down his mother's picture, which he had been holding all along. "Of course, I knew you would have the right answer." He got up, looking very much relieved.

"But I haven't said a word," said his aunt bewildered. "What will you do?"

"Not marry her, of course. Here, Aunt Lucy; I almost forgot to give you your present. I picked it up in Reval two nights ago. So long, Auntie."

It was a bottle of Danzig *Goldwasser*. Dear, dear Willy.

There was hardly time to call after him to take good care of himself and avoid getting colds. He was down the stairs in no time, and after another second she heard the car outside give a snarl and move off in the darkness.

She felt empty. Willy had come and gone so suddenly. And talked about such silly things. Was there a knock at the door? She opened rather unwillingly, in no mood for questions. It was Frau Mosler, come to inquire for news from the front. She had a son at the front and it was just possible that the Colonel had a message from him.

But Frau van Druten had no message to hand on. The other turned to go, looking paler and more crushed than ever. Frau van Druten felt sorry for her. In sudden inspiration she went to the cupboard, drew forth the pastry, and handed it to the other woman.

"From Conditor Schüler of Bismarckstrasse," she said. "His wife sent it, but it's nothing for me. Doctor's orders."

She shoved the woman out of the room, then walked toward the alcove where her bed stood and started to undress.

Winter Solstice

BY ROLFE HUMPHRIES

Look sharp, to see the winter day
  Before the January thaw
Presume upon a longer stay
  Hardly visible, though.

Beyond this light that falls on snow,
  Bright orange on sheer white, behold
The lawn with softer texture glow
  Green under gold.

Watch the bare tree, whose print you know
  Familiar on the single cloud,
Fuse with that rounded shadow, draw
  That rounded shape around
  To cast on summer ground.

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Everybody's Business

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

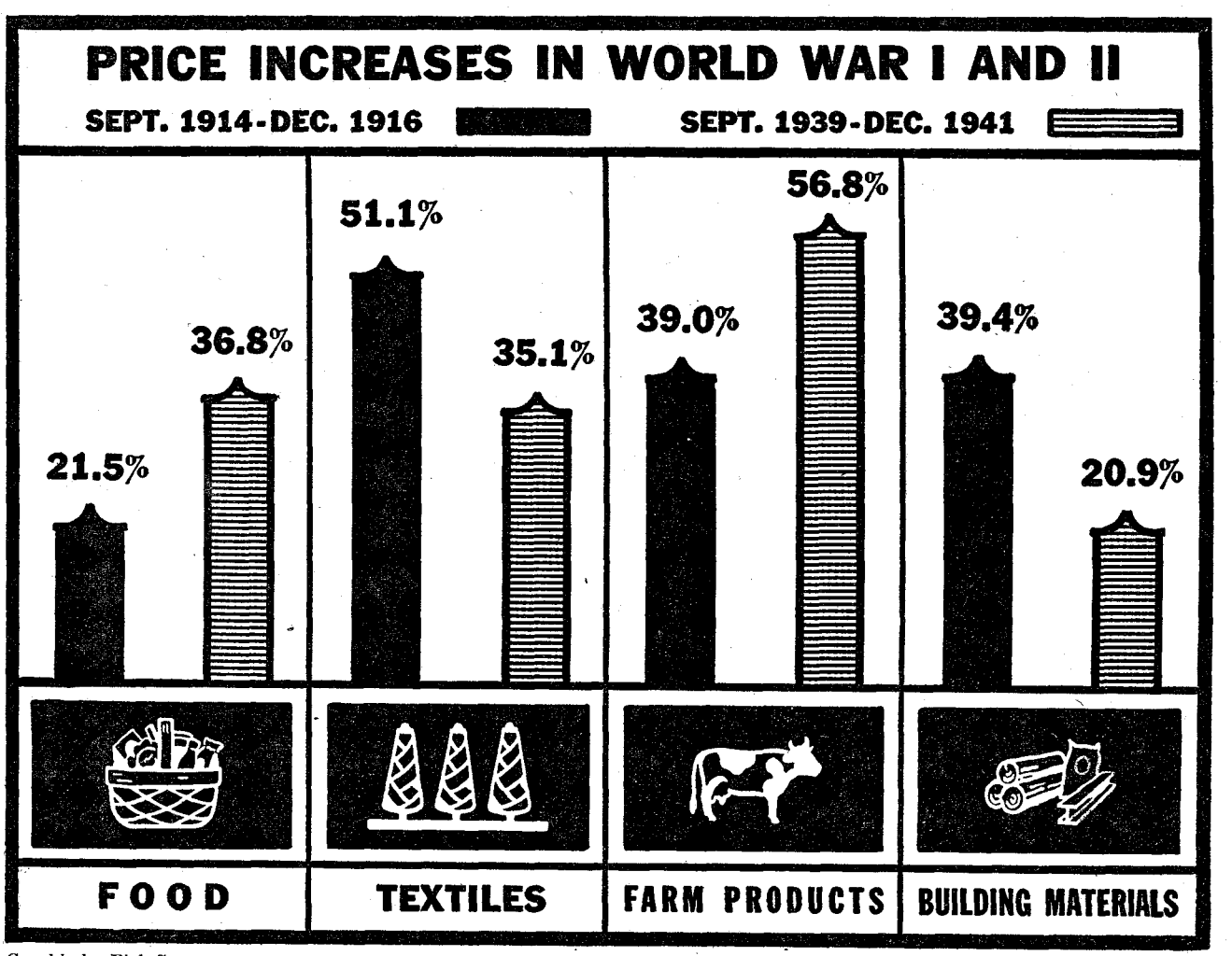
The Inflationary Spiral

IN DECEMBER, 1916, World War I had been in progress for twenty-eight months, and our entry into the conflict was still in the future. But the United States had for some time been experiencing a war boom, thanks to Allied orders, and there had been a considerable rise in prices—not so sharp a rise, however, as took place between the outbreak of World War II and Pearl Harbor.

The chart below, based on the weekly indices of wholesale commodity prices compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, illustrates some interesting differences in price movements during these two periods. In the past two years, it shows, the prices of food and farm products have risen much more steeply than in 1914-16, while prices in the two industrial groups—textiles and building materials—have moved upward more sedately. In the earlier period there was, of course, no attempt at price control; that was deferred until after we had become a participant in the war. But ever since September, 1939, the federal authorities have been attempting to discourage a rise in the cost of living.

The chart is both an illustration of the very partial success which has been achieved and a comment on the appalling dilatoriness of Congress, which after being in labor with a price-control bill for over six months seems about to give birth to a monstrosity designed to promote inflation. The Senate's parity-plus bill, unless drastically amended, is likely to give a sharp twist to the inflationary spiral forcing wages and industrial prices upward in the wake of farm products.

Up to now the manufacturers have been comparatively discreet in their demands for higher prices—their profits have been healthy anyhow—and have at least paid lip-service to the ideal of financing the war without inflation. They have been content to let the farmers carry the ball, knowing that you cannot have inflation in one economic sector without having it in another, and knowing, too, that business is better placed than agriculture not only to make money out of rocketing prices but to keep it. However, a recent note in the financial pages of the New York *Sun* was suggestive. "The way to get more munitions and win the war," wrote Carlton Shively, "is to let the most powerful of all production stimulants —price—get to work. We can preach patriotism, urge the purchase of defense bonds, implore everyone to sacrifice, imprison chiselers, and what not, but the way to get the goods is to pay for them."



Graphic by Pick-S

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Congress Can Stop Inflation

BY FRANK D. GRAHAM

THE frivolity of Congress in merely toying with alleged expedients in the prevention of inflation is placing the Treasury in an embarrassing and dangerous dilemma. It is clear that the greater the sale of government securities to private individuals—rather than to banks—the greater will be the check on inflation. But unless the intelligent private citizen is assured that inflation will be stopped in its tracks, he will surely hesitate to buy government or any other bonds, and the Treasury, therefore, cannot sell to the populace at large its existing types of securities, under existing circumstances, without resorting to something very close to chicane. Though a large sale of bonds to the public would do a good deal to stop inflation, the sale of the present types of bonds can be made with a clear conscience, if at all, only as inflation is prevented, whether or not the sale of bonds is large.

Inflation could be stopped dead if Congress really meant business, but unless it *is* stopped dead, it can scarcely be stopped at all. Inflation does not just happen; it is purely an outcome of a failure to restrict the monetary purchasing power in private hands to an amount no more than sufficient to buy at preexisting prices the volume of goods currently available to the public. At the moment, this is the failure to siphon off into the Treasury, through taxation plus borrowing from real savers—not from the banks—the same proportion of private income as the Treasury's outlay for the panoply of war bears to the total national income. Inflation will not be stopped by threats to cut off heads, or by any powers given to any official for this purpose, but solely by the abstraction of enough of the people's now enlarged money income to keep private spending to the amount appropriate to the available volume of consumers' goods. For this purpose taxation and real borrowing are both complements and alternatives, each to the other.

The fact that prices are held to an existing level is always a powerful influence in combating forces under which they would rise. For when people see that prices are *not* rising, they are disposed to accumulate money balances and this keeps prices down. But when they see that prices *are* rising, the desire to spend their money before it loses in value becomes urgent, and money balances are then drawn on to a quite abnormal extent. This sends prices up and inaugurates a spiral of spending, rising prices, more spending, a further jump in prices, jacked-up wage rates to take care of the rising cost of living, and so *ad infinitum*. It is an illusion to suppose that we can have inflation in any measure that we will. On the contrary, inflation is a wild horse to which, in circumstances like the present, it is madness to give any rein whatsoever.

Unless inflation is prevented, the citizen who buys bonds of the existing type is, in the sequel, cajoled into paying taxes under the delusion that he is making an investment. It would be much better to make him pay his taxes straight, because in this fashion the job to be done can be accomplished much more effectively, and cheaply, than in any other way. If we have inflation, the money incomes—and the real incomes—of certain sectors of the population will be increased through no special virtue or contribution on their part. Such incomes will rise at the expense of others and, what is more important, to the detriment of our common purpose, since the enlarged incomes will be taken, at least in part, in goods which the demand of the recipients of higher money incomes will call into being. Such goods can be produced only by limitation of our potential military output. If, therefore, we tax by way of inflation, the tax will be harmful to our present urgent purpose, and will bear crushingly upon the most provident members of the community while sparing the wastrels.

The case against the issue of bonds under existing conditions does not turn merely on the prospective decrease in their value. For a long time now I have put by a large proportion of my very modest income in the purchase of what I hoped would be an adequate deferred annuity for my declining years. This is the great bulk of my life's savings. The terms of the contract preclude the surrender of my claim for an immediate cash consideration, and I cannot, therefore, even make the attempt to hedge myself against the menace of a decline in the value of the monetary unit. In the degree of the inflation I shall, as a result, not only be deprived of a large part of my current income but have my savings taken from me as well. This confiscation of my capital might very readily so reduce my net worth year by year as much more than to wipe out any income I might receive. Whatever the proportion of the net social income that the government would have to take to cover expenditures *completely* by taxation, I would still be better off.

My case is far from unique. If we have inflation, the whole system of "social security" which we have been building up will become a mockery. At the inception of the social-security program certain malevolently inspired antagonists propagated the doctrine that the govern-

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ment's obligations would be directly repudiated when the time came to make heavy payments thereunder. This was an obvious canard. The government will without any doubt meet its obligations, in the accounting sense, but in the degree that inflation has occurred it will be repudiating them in fact. The people concerned will surely be more interested in the fact than in the form, and any such repudiation by subterfuge is, as the experience of Germany has shown, the open door to the most violent social disturbances.

Since no person or corporation will buy government bonds of existing types without coaxing so long as the prospect of inflation is not scotched, the Treasury has almost no option but to spread the lime for prospective purchasers of its issues, unless and until Congress takes really effective action. The Treasury is of course entitled to assume that Congress will act to preclude the spoliation of those honest and thrifty citizens whose interests they are both supposed to serve. But the citizens, observing the actions of Congress up to the present time, would not be justified in any such assumption. The sole way that the Treasury could escape from the dilemma into which it is thrust by the tergiversations of Congress would be by the offer of a new type of bond payable as to both interest and principal according to an index of general prices or cost of living.

The expedient just mentioned is a not very satisfactory substitute for Congressional measures intelligently designed to prevent any inflation, but it would be a whole lot better than nothing. People would no doubt readily buy such bonds, regardless of the prospect of inflation, even if they were issued at next to a zero rate of interest. The buyers' real welfare, moreover, and that of all holders of claims against mutual insurance companies would be much better realized, under inflation, if these companies should also buy heavily of such bonds rather than of those that bore a much higher, nominally positive but really negative, rate of interest.

The true way to tap the savings of private individuals is to keep a stable price level. But if a vacillating legislature cannot summon the resolution necessary to avert the stupendous evils which inflation bears in its womb, the Treasury might at least refrain from duping the trusting buyer of its present issues, and give him a gilt-edged bond rather than an alleged "security" surrounded by a broad band of—perhaps temporarily invisible—mourning.

The very issue of securities carrying money interest payments, and redemption, proportioned to the money cost of living would provide a strong impetus to the adoption of checks to inflation. The money burden on the government in its purchases of war materials will rise as the price level rises, and the money cost to the Treasury of interest and redemption of the bonds would then also rise in corresponding degree. The concern of the government, as an administrative body, in the prevention of debasement of the value of the dollar would therefore run on all fours with the immediate and permanent concern of the people as a whole. It is not impossible that in the effort to prevent an increase in the money cost of financing the war Congress might screw up the courage to do its duty resolutely and see to it that inflation does not occur, thus relieving the Treasury of the dilemma into which it is otherwise inevitably thrust.

In the Wind

THE PUBLISHERS of "Mission to Moscow," the communiqués, diary, and letters of Joseph E. Davies when he was ambassador to the Soviet Union, have been displaying in their advertisements a blurb by President Roosevelt. "You exercised," writes the President, "a happy faculty in evaluating events at hand and determining with singular accuracy their probable effect on future developments." Since the most publicized feature of "Mission to Moscow" is its support of the thesis that the 1936-38 purges gave Russia the internal unity necessary for its fight against Hitler, the President's statement in the context of the ad has been widely interpreted as an indorsement of that view. The fact is that the statement was not prepared for the book at all but is an excerpt from a letter written by Roosevelt to Davies two years ago when the latter resigned his post as "special assistant to the State Department in charge of war emergency problems and policies."

AT THE NOVEMBER CONVENTION of the C. I. O. it was claimed by many anti-Lewis delegates that the United Mine Workers were trying to raid and destroy the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, a left-wing union headed by Reid Robinson. Now, with the tide running high against Lewis, the situation is reversed, and the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers are gaining ground at the U. M. W.'s expense. Several organizers from District 50 of the U. M. W. have gone over to Robinson's union, and jurisdictional disputes are developing in several sections.

THE CURRENT ISSUE of *Free World* has an editorial note apologizing for its failure to include its regular book section and promising to make amends in the next issue. Among the books listed as not reviewed on schedule is Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* first published in 1888.

TOM GIRDLER, former head of Republic Steel, on the war: "The Japanese are little yellow insects, and it is our job to build planes that will drop bombs on them."

ED KELLY, mayor of Chicago, on the peace: "We must make this nation so strong that, when peace finally comes, President Roosevelt will be able to sit down at the conference table and tell every other nation in the world to go to hell, if that will be for the best interest of the United States."

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*]

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A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

Report from the Low Country

ONCE there was a signpost on the Battery in Charleston. Tourists rode by and were amused by it. A wooden arrow pointed out across the bay, past Fort Sumter and the sea islands. It said, "To Europe," and it gave the exact number of miles. I did not see the sign when I was there this time. The bay was as blue as it ever had been in January. The park between the abrupt skyscraper hotel and the elegant old houses, many of them owned by Charlestonians-for-the-season-only, was quiet and secure. But the memory of the signboard remained, and the miles it counted seemed shorter. Maybe because Charleston had seemed so pleasantly remote from the world, it seemed closer to the war. Perhaps because it was a sort of central point on the road from the North to the sun it seemed even more significant in change than the camp and factory and seaport cities which have been overwhelmed. There is a continuing durability in Charleston's quaintness. There you can see, all on one excellent stage, what has happened to the millionaire and the migrant.

Like most grand dames, Charleston was always a good deal more hard-headed than it seemed. Even when its faith was in tourists and its trade was in antiques and charm, Charleston kept one foot firmly planted in the Navy Yard. Its aristocrats hated the New Deal but were glad to see the Santee-Cooper power project spread across the wet lands around it and between the plantations of the millionaires. Today old pipe-smoking Negro women still sell flowers on the streets. Out in the theatrically beautiful gardens the azaleas, which once seemed the most material of assets, are already in process of secretly blooming to the season. Also North Charleston sprawls in trailers and new square miles of housing projects. Even down below Broad Street and near the Battery defense workers have displaced tourists. There are ensigns on the streets, young fliers of the interceptor command, welders, bookkeepers, stenographers who are richer than they were when they worked for decorous law firms. There are Gullah Negroes who would rather work for Uncle Sam at $3.50 a day than for sea-island truck growers at $1.50. Any "foreign" construction foreman must have as much trouble understanding their talk as the tourists did. Even the biggest tourist hotel explains —"but not as apology"—that its service may not be quite what it used to be because many of its veteran employees have left to serve the country.

Still Charleston wonders about the tourists—and not only Charleston. Even Mr. Rockefeller's Williamsburg in Virginia is telling its old patrons hopefully that the brave British clung to their week-ends. It is just a little way to the Williamsburg where so much of our democracy began from the crowded Washington where it is being defended. An exhausted patriot can depend on Williamsburg for patriotic resuscitation between Friday and Monday. But Charleston knows that it is a long way for a week-end for its best old customers even by air. Old ladies in limousines have to think about tires as much as the drivers of jalopies. The Charleston season is embarrassingly close to the government's own tax season on March 15. But halfway down the road from Manhattan to Miami, it seems also at the center of the question of what war will do to the vast American touring industry, which sometimes seems as vital as any industrial priorities problem from California to Maine.

There is, of course, just as much profit for a taxicab driver in hauling sailors to town as there was in hauling tourists to the gardens. Railroads sell more tickets and meals and beer to New York boys returning to Savannah from furloughs than it ever did to patrons on their way to Palm Beach. It may be harder on the furniture, but a landlady gets as much money from three welders in a room all the time as she could collect from a season of wealthy tourists. She not only gets more money; she uses fewer sheets. Neither ensigns nor admirals buy as many antiques, but something must have happened to the import trade in Southern antiques, most of which used to come by the shipload from England.

This is written only as a report of change to a good many Americans who are going to have to stay home and work this winter or just stay home and take a load off their tires. The quaintness and the quietude of the old places they used to go to—and Charleston is only one of them—might not be quite the same even if they could get there. There may soon be an air-raid siren in the steeple of old St. Michael's Church, high over the quiet cemetery and the narrow twisting streets. That siren would be designed to warn Charleston. It would not only wake a welder; up over the quietness of Charleston it would jerk even a millionaire out of his bed, even out of a four-poster under a tester in a mansion which rents in season for $20 a night. Apparently the azaleas haven't heard all this news; they are still moving to bloom. And the sun is warm on the shipbuilders and the empty sea wall alike.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

GOOD CRITICS, RARE AND COMMON*

BY MARK VAN DOREN

THE good critic is both rare and common. The common sort is never heard from, for he is that private reader to whom the writer writes, he is that nameless stranger, wise, humorous, and sensitive, who understands everything; his is the perfect mind which perceives that the truth of a written thing is most apparent while it is being read, and that this truth, though simple to the point of delight, is also multiple beyond the power of commentary. He is a legend in whom the writer must believe, but he is more than a legend; he is any man who reads well. The rare sort reads as well, and as privately; then publishes a record of his reading. But if he is truly a rare one he does not expect too much of the record. He does not count on its being complete, either for the thing he has just read or for literature as the whole thing which I shall henceforth call poetry. He does not assume that criticism, cooled into words, can define poetry any more than poetry, having found even its best form, can be adequate to life. He is bold, or he would not have spoken at all; but he has the modesty, the healthy fear, of one who explores difficult places.

He has also the wit of one who is free to see that he may be out of place altogether, or if he belongs where he is, that his stay should be short. The rare good critic knows above all things how to be brief. This is because he has other concerns than literature alone, and larger ones, though he may not speak of them; he may only imply them in the air he has of not being overwhelmed by the duty of the moment, which indeed in his hand seems less a duty than a pleasure. The rare good poet wears the same manner with respect to his work, concerning which we can assume that it was only one way, perhaps accidentally arrived at, by which in any case he would have said what he had to say, been what he was to be. The critic can afford more often than he does to leave some space between him and his subject; to move in easy, rapid circles around it; and to dart in with judgments only when they offer themselves to him naturally, as it were on the fly. He is more likely then to say things which we shall remember—most critics never do that—and to leave his game as much alive in the end as it was before he stalked it. He can afford to keep his head up and his eyes on everything around him; to remember, in brief, that criticism is an art at which luck and love assist. The last thing he can afford to do is to move in on poetry like a beater, crouched and tensed, to seize it at the center. For it may not be there when he arrives; it may be running rings around him as he creeps; and anyhow, tension is not the tool. The relaxed man may learn more, even if it is only that when the animal charges the best thing is to step out of its way, throwing a glance over a shoulder and saying what one sees.

All of which is fanciful, but the current notion of the critic, judging by the endless articles which accumulate in the quarterlies, is fantastic. The encirclement which poetry is undergoing there is as dreadful to behold as it is humorless to hear. The environment for art which this criticism would provide is sand, not sense: deserts of ingenuity and plateaus of learning, but almost never the clear figure of a man who approaches and sees, and with a decent suddenness says what he sees. The effort, it would seem, is not to liberate poetry into a current of true and fresh ideas such as Matthew Arnold once asked for but to crowd in upon it, capture it with definitions, and immobilize it. Poetry already struggles as if bound, as if breathing were hard. And this may mean that Arnold's ideas have lost their freshness. But it may mean too that Arnold was wrong in the emphasis he placed upon ideas as a condition for poetry, just as he was wrong in assuming that he or anyone could know the relation between Shakespeare's art and the thinking of his time. We do not know that much about poetry, and we never shall. Yet the contemporary critic, more Arnold's grandson than he chooses to admit, goes on heaping dunes of ideas about the figure of poetry in the dry hope that she will then revive. The notion that she had drooped for reasons other than her own was Arnold's too. So there she sits, teased night and day to listen while the possibility of her existence is debated. No wonder she still droops, if she does.

Criticism was never more academic than it is now. But it is not about the rules and the proprieties that we are lectured. It is about the processes and the symbols; criticism, obsessed with a desire to be scientific toward poetry, limits itself to questions of psychology and language. How does it feel to think like a poet, and how does he shuffle the counters of speech? The questions are inherited from Coleridge and Wordsworth, who inherited them from Dryden and Hobbes. "What is poetry?" said Coleridge, "is so nearly the same question with What is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other." The place to look was in the poet's own mind, which for Coleridge had become the special wonder of the world. As if it were more wonderful than the mind of man as such, and as if poets must be more or less than men in order to be at all. What the mind thinks is a better question than how it does it, if only because the second question, being unanswerable, begets doubts that thinking is ever done. Contemporary criticism never doubts, however, that this is the place to hover and halt; and it has already halted so long that in the perfection of its rest there is some taint of rottenness. Our literary age is sick with a distempered appetite for the latest news of itself. Its writing is about writing; the heroes of its novels are writers; the death of James Joyce moved many who will never read

* This essay forms the preface to a collection of reviews, many of which appeared in *The Nation;* the volume will be published in February by Henry Holt and Company.

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"Finnegans Wake" to lament the loss of "one who after all was so pure a writer." So pure that he cannot be read by them. But that does not matter, for is he not the most special case to date of the special mind which poets by definition must possess?

The tragedy of Joyce is a footnote to the comedy of his time, whose thoughts run so laughably in the one groove of language. The obsession with this single element among several in the art of composition is at least as old as Coleridge, who for all his promise that he would substitute poetic thoughts for poetic diction did but commit his successors in criticism to a serial, self-perpetuating revolution of the word. The series grows tiresome, begins to seem temporary; for even if it is tolerably old it cannot claim to be ancient. Language occupies a corner in Aristotle's "Poetics," but only a corner. The foreground is filled with action, character, design; with understanding and discovery; with life itself, of which poetry is a report. And if it be objected that Aristotle limited his discussion to poetry as story, the answer is that he did not therein limit poetry. He released it for the exercise of its largest function, which is to show humanity in motion. Even lyric poetry does that when it is alive: as it never again will be if criticism can help it.

Criticism is doing all it can to arrest the lyric in its flight. Rhythm, gesture, sound box, and vocal cord: it disciplines itself to be blind and deaf toward these, which it despises as the mere essentials of an art. The incidentals, the dictionary meanings, are what it loves, and little heed is paid to whether they are truly there in the poem or not. The poem is a bird that threatens to escape the net of analysis; so the net grows ever wider, and tougher with inwoven semantic threads. It will fail of its purpose, but meanwhile it yawns everywhere through criticism and depresses its victim. It can make nothing of first lines like those in Shakespeare's sonnets and songs, or of Defoe's best prose. Such things, being undiscussable, are passed over as unimportant. And indeed their only importance is that they startle us into recognition of the mystery which smiles through language whenever it succeeds. Criticism now is not greatly interested in success, just as it is nervous in the presence of genius. It prefers the poem whose author can be seen sweating at his job of extending or intensifying an image to the point of systematic dulness, to the end of an admirable aridity. Criticism, itself a puritan for work, can praise only the laborious, can respect poetry only when it groans to overreach itself and become discussable. A sensible acquaintance of mine once remarked of the semantic brethren that they missed only one meaning: some people write better than others. But they are not bothered with better and worse, they have not left themselves free to make judgments. Criticism as they practice it is at best a faulty science. It is not an art.

The art of reviewing, what is it? First it is the art of reading without prejudice, without demand, without thought of the reader's self. This is one of love's arts, for it is nothing less than a skill in surrender, a readiness to understand. Afterward comes memory of what has been experienced, and the describer's art which sets that memory down as precisely as possible, honoring its uniqueness. Only then come measurement, comparison, judgment, and perspective.

Letters to Montagu

HORACE WALPOLE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH GEORGE MONTAGU. Edited by W. S. Lewis and Ralph S. Brown. Yale University Press. Two Volumes. $15.

THESE are the ninth and tenth volumes in the still far from completed series devoted to Walpole's correspondence, and it is hardly necessary to repeat that the edition is obviously one of the great works in its class—physically as well as in the thoroughness with which the material has been collected, arranged, and annotated. Walpole can now be read with more pleasure and completer understanding than ever before; more could hardly be said in praise of any edition.

The present two volumes follow the established plan of printing both sides of the correspondence in chronological order, and this correspondence is probably more intrinsically interesting than either of the two previously dealt with. With William Cole, Walpole discussed chiefly antiquarian matters; writing to Mme du Deffand he was both uncomfortably aware of a duty to be done and somewhat constrained by the necessity of keeping the devotion of his aged admirer within bounds; but the letters to Montagu were written *con amore*. So far as Montagu himself is concerned, he did little to justify the great name he bore except write letters to Walpole, and apparently he grew finally too indolent to do even that, but the two had been school friends and Montagu was more than a good recipient. He could write in Walpole's own style and was, indeed, probably partly responsible for the style his more industrious friend brought to perfection.

The correspondence begins with a letter to Montagu dated May 2, 1736, when Walpole was not yet twenty; it ends with another to Montagu which was written in October, 1770, many years before the writer's death but recording an attack of the gout so severe that "though seven long weeks are gone and over since I was seized, I am only able to creep about on a flat floor, but cannot go up or down stairs." In between lie more than 700 pages of letters which not only distil the essence of a lively and accomplished man but also present a picture of the political and fashionable world drawn by one in a singularly fortunate position, for Walpole was a detached spectator whose birth, nevertheless, gave him the right to come as close to the scene as he cared to at any moment, and even, when he so desired, to mingle with it. As Mr. Lewis remarks in his introduction, these letters begin merely as private if formally composed epistles but show increasingly the effect of Walpole's later intention to leave a record for posterity; and they include famous passages of descriptive narration like that of the "Richmond Fireworks" and of the entertainments in honor of the Princess Amelia. Yet it is certainly one of the charms of Walpole that few others have been able so successfully to incorporate set pieces into familiar letters while still making it seem that they belong there.

I should not be surprised if one effect of this edition should be to reduce somewhat the currency of the textbook sneers so often repeated in connection with Walpole. His were certainly not heroic virtues, though his liberal opinions were probably more sincere as well as more often publicly expressed than is sometimes assumed. God (and Sir Robert)

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made him self-indulgent though amiable, somewhat effeminate, and wholly a dilettante. But it can hardly be said that he failed to make effective use of the talents he had.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

First Book

POEMS. By Anna Maria Armi. Random House. $2.

MISS ARMI, we are told, came to this country from Italy only ten years ago, and since that time has mastered the English language sufficiently to use it as a medium of poetry. She does write well; and she must have had the advantage, to begin with, of knowing a good deal about poetry.

There are traces, still, of foreign idiom—the vocabulary is weighted rather beyond the normal with words of Latin derivation; a poet whose native language is English would be less inclined to rhyme, for instance, *heart* and *hart,* or *lastingness* and *nothingness,* or to say "morose canescence," even in translating Horace. The beat comes trochaic often when the native ear would expect an iamb; the pronouns, more prominently placed, are subject to more stress than we impose on them in English; the word order is occasionally wrenched, for no effect that one can see. There are many set forms; translations and poems in classical meters aside, we find many sonnets, as well as examples of the villanelle, the sestina, and another form whose name I do not know, but which Miss Armi uses with excellent effect in untitled poems on pages 53 and 87. But these matters may derive from personal as much as from foreign language.

Before a single poem had been published, Miss Armi's work had been discovered by Mark Van Doren and W. H. Auden; where and how the jacket does not say. Her discovery of Auden, I take it, must have antedated her discovery by him. This shows Miss Armi's good sense; however great pleasure the reader might derive from picking up a first book of verse without a sign of Auden's influence, he would have to face the chance that it might not be very good. For Auden's talent, of course, is the most impressive—and instructive—to come along in our time. Miss Armi has also, I surmise, read Yeats with profit.

On Miss Armi's account I wish that her poems had been more effectively organized; is nobody around Random House competent to give advice in such matters? There seems no particular order in the arrangement of the collection, which is also somewhat long for a first book, though God knows a young poet can be forgiven for thinking, these days, that a first book may well be the last, and shooting the works accordingly. The collection suffers, moreover, from not being broken up into sections; 131 pages, straight, before the 30 pages of translations begin, does impose considerable demand on the powers of sustained concentration; and the fact that many poems are untitled complicates the situation. Under the circumstances, the index of first lines, however necessary, is still cluttersome.

Miss Armi's lyrical style, so far, tends to philosophical and reflective statement; she has still to learn how the English language may be put to singing use, how to make it sharp and incisive, how to relieve allegory by getting more significant work out of the symbol. It is to be hoped that in the next ten years her work will find occasional publication, not merely accumulate, and that editors will not only welcome her original poems but use her excellent talent as translator. There can't be too many good translations of Horace and Catullus.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

War and the Writer

A LEAF IN THE STORM. By Lin Yutang. The John Day Company. $2.50.

IN TIME of war the writer suffers under the same forces of dislocation as the rest of us, but on him their effect is double, for he reacts both in his own person and in the persons and world of his creation. He is not only *in* the war, and thus disabled, but his guns are spiked, since he is deprived of his heritage as a writer. How a writer writes is, in every age and under whatever compulsion, more than half determined by the reservoir of past writing; and in time of war the stream of the tradition in which he must work is dammed up, its current cut off by the influx of new values that for the best of human reasons demand to be expressed only in terms of their own overriding urgency. In so far as it is capable of literary form, however, the writer's material cannot be expressed in its own terms; it must take its form from past writing. Consequently the old mode of expression persists while the new insists; and both are impoverished.

"Our task here," writes Lin Yutang, "is to trace what the war did to one woman, one leaf among the millions." Neither the task nor the tracing, neither the end nor the means, is as simple as the thesis, for the author is under a twofold authority: the war story, which demands its own uncompromising treatment; and the love story, which is written, as it had to be, from past literary tradition. Neither succeeds. The stories are not fused by the one woman, Tanni, or by the tricks used by every novelist, which are too patent here, especially the misunderstanding between Tanni and Poya, contrived for the express purpose of moving Tanni from the love story to the war story. Nor are the elements of the plot followed through; we are told what is to happen but we do not see it happen. And although the characters are sometimes permitted to act naturally, the action is far too often merely stated, described, recapitulated. It follows that the emotion of the characters is not felt, for the emotion is not completed in suitable action, only in action obviously manipulated by the author. The arbitrarily contrasted characters of Peng and Poya are presented fully formed and undergo but scant change because of the war or their love for Tanni. Peng is better realized than Poya, who is so static that, incapable of dying, he has finally to be killed off by the author in self-defense. I feel, too, in this book, as compared with "Moment in Peking," the intrusion in the love story of an especially Western kind of vulgarity—the flabby notion and facile routine of "romance," the groove in which the writers of so many best-selling novels play.

"A Leaf in the Storm" is a failure when it is judged by the standards Lin Yutang has himself provided in his best work, "Moment in Peking." Few novelists today have Lin Yutang's feeling for a scene, his ease in filling a room with

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living people; none have his beautiful sense of poise, which, when he describes voices, features, mannerisms, or even Tanni perched on a chair, makes the book inhabited by a presence that seems actually to exist in space. For Dr. Lin, who does not have that much overrated talent for condensation, the major fault of the book is its brevity. If it had been at least twice as long—it has 368 pages—the story and the plot might possibly have worked themselves out. Then the part about the war would have had the scope provided by a long novel for the blending of detail. And the characters, who seem so eager to grasp every opportunity they are given to act naturally, might have found the leisure to enjoy the ease and naturalness which are the author's best qualities.

The pages about the war (1937-38) are often interesting in themselves, but except when they are an integral part of the story they are simply informative and, as such, extraneous to a novel. Information kills the characters by establishing two levels of communication which do not meet. A novel should be an uninterrupted amplification and clarification of the author's intention, and this intention is weakened or completely nullified by the intrusion of information. Even generalizations such as "the wrong man has done to man" or "war does strange things to people" have meaning in a novel only when, in the novel's living context, they are conclusions arrived at, known, and suffered through in terms of the ordered fiction of the book. Then, as in life, such statements take on a tragic meaning.

As for the war itself, the author sees the enemy committing atrocities "not possible with normal men," killing "for the delight of it." If the enemy is the measure of abnormality, what safeguard is there for the sanity of the enemy's enemy? It is learned nonsense to suggest that "to make the matter plain . . . the realms of abnormal and criminal psychology and of mass and race psychology must be coordinated." And this affirmation of Poya's is also nonsense, more shocking even if more understandable: "But in order to have the morale to stand up under these sufferings, every Chinese must hate the Japanese. Therefore the Japanese soldiers must continue to be as brutal and beastly as they are now."

"For even as one shut out from a garden and come away still keeps thinking of the garden . . ."—I remember these words from "A Leaf in the Storm," for some such feeling as they convey kept turning my mind back to "Moment in Peking" with every succeeding page. My warm welcome to Mulan, who is reintroduced, brought home the difference between the books. In "Moment in Peking" the life of the characters and of the places derives largely from the conventions, the form, of an ordered society, providing frame, definition, boundaries, within which the individuality of the characters is projected. It is this formal restraint of conventions, of a continuity, of a base taken for granted, that must be present before the individual life of a character can have more than an isolated meaning. War, striking at the writer with doubled impact, deprives him of the security necessary to the consummation of his talent. It is no wonder that in most novels written in time of war the story is perfunctory and the characters are unconvincing. While a civilization is at war, neither the writer nor the people he writes of are capable of the orderly development through which completeness is achieved.

H. P. LAZARUS

The Soviet Defense

HITLER CANNOT CONQUER RUSSIA. By Maurice Hindus. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.

THE KREMLIN AND THE PEOPLE. By Walter Duranty. Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.

SEVEN months of war on the plains of western Russia are over, with neither the Soviets nor Hitler as yet decisively beaten. Defeated, utterly, are only the world's military experts, or at least the great majority of them. For the second time since September, 1939, their theories and predictions have been proved totally wrong by the march of events.

First these experts banked heavily on the impregnability of the Maginot Line and on the glorious record of the French army: the famous line cracked at the first push, and within a few weeks the "world's best army" found itself in German concentration camps. Next the experts were ready to bet their last button that the Red Army would be a pushover for Hitler's legions and that an anti-Stalin revolution would quickly follow. So was the high Washington official who confidentially told Maurice Hindus, a few weeks before the outbreak of the Nazi-Soviet war: "The German army will go through Russia like a knife through butter." Well, today the knife looks badly blunted, and it was the butter that did it.

Liberals, too, made a lot of mistakes in their judgment of Soviet policies and Soviet chances, not so much from the military point of view—those who had seen something of Russia with their own eyes were much less defeatist than the military experts—but in their appreciation of Stalin's zigzag course up to the fateful June 22, 1941. There are, in the main, three issues on which most liberals erred, not perhaps from an ideological point of view, but from the standpoint of a realistic policy. First, seeing the tremendous holocaust of life, comfort, and happiness which the rigorous application of the successive five-year plans exacted from the Russion people, they were appalled by what they took to be the inherent ruthlessness and despotism of the Stalin regime; second, they condemned *en bloc* the bloody purges of the years 1936-38 as the desperate attempt of a dictator to crush all opposition to his rule; third, in their dogmatic horror of aggression and natural sympathy for the under-dog they were completely swept off their feet by the "'unwarranted" Russian attack on Finland in December, 1939.

Today it must be admitted, I believe, that many of Stalin's acts were dictated by necessity. Although we may never be willing to condone the methods employed in the purge, the Finnish War, and other cases, we should not close our eyes to the fact that these were preventive measures which subsequently were justified by the course of events. Everything the Soviet dictator did, or failed to do, after the advent of Hitlerism—even the nefarious pact of August, 1939, which has *not* proved a sound instrument of diplomacy in the light of later developments—was ultimately designed to strengthen Russia's position for the inevitable life-and-death struggle with the Nazi forces.

All the world admits now that if the democracies today stand a fair chance of winning this war against the fascist world front, it is primarily thanks to the magnificent staying

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power and push of the Soviets. But the Red Army would never have been able to withstand the Nazi onslaught if years of intensive preparation had not given it a mechanized equipment comparable to that of the Germans. It was, in Hitler's own admission, the amount and quality of this equipment—much of which was and is being produced in the new industrial districts far beyond the Urals—that turned the tables on Nazi aggression.

In his very informative "Hitler Cannot Conquer Russia" Maurice Hindus presents a complete survey of this "hidden strength" of Russia, how it was built up, at an enormous cost of life and material comfort, and how it was set in motion to save the Soviet state from the new Napoleon. He takes us, painstakingly, on a tour of inspection through "the new factory" and "the new farm" of Russia—the sinews of Soviet resistance and counter-attack.

Only once under the Soviet regime has the long-suffering Russian people had a short period of ease and material comfort. That was during the winter and summer of 1935-36. It did not last long, because soon the Hitler menace took a formidable shape and the entire economic system of Russia had to be placed on a war footing. The production of consumers' goods once more became unimportant as compared with the need for machines. "Every available ruble," writes Hindus, "went into national defense." Once again hardship and privation became the Russian lot.

But it is not only because of the vastness of Russia and its tremendous industrial resources that Hitler cannot conquer that country. It is also because he has nothing to offer to the Russian peasant, no longer a mujik, to the new intelligentsia, or to the Russian worker. Next to the monumental misjudgment of the military experts, the greatest miscalculation of the Soviet war was Hitler's belief that his "crusade" would lead to a Russian national revolution. The peasants did not rise, except as guerrillas to fight the invader; the intelligentsia in the conquered regions did not cooperate; the workers moved, with their equipment, to new industrial regions far behind the front; even nine-tenths of the White Russian emigration abroad rallied to the Soviet banner.

It matters little, in Maurice Hindus's opinion, whether or not Hitler occupies Moscow, Leningrad, all of European Russia, or even more, beyond the Urals. "The formal front may collapse. The Red Army in Europe may break up into disconnected units. That will not end the hostilities. All occupied Russia will become a front. Fighting will go on, anywhere, everywhere."

Walter Duranty's book is concerned more with the political and moral than with the economic and military aspects of the "Russian miracle." His is a lively, colorful account of the why and wherefores of the frequently puzzling policy which the Kremlin has pursued these last few years at home and abroad.

The book centers around the great purge, which has been one of the principal contributing causes to the world's failure to appreciate the internal strength and cohesion of the Soviet state. It is Duranty's well-substantiated opinion that a great many, though certainly not all, of the victims of the successive purges were guilty of conspiracy against the security and integrity of the Soviet Union. This applies, in particular, to the group comprising Radek, Piatakov, and Muralov, and

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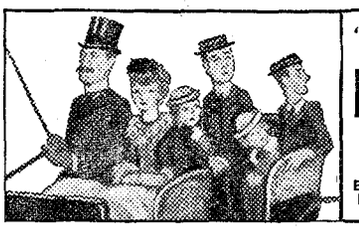

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to the eight generals headed by Marshal Tukhachevsky. It is true that the trial and summary execution of these ranking officers did much to undermine Soviet Russia's prestige abroad, but it also eliminated in time a fifth column of the first magnitude. France might still live today if it too had carried out a timely purge of its generals.

JOACHIM JOESTEN

Proportional Representation

DEMOCRACY OR ANARCHY? A STUDY OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. By F. A. Hermens. With an Introduction by C. J. Friedrich. Notre Dame (Indiana), The Review of Politics. $4.

WHEN the electorate has to choose one man to be, say, President of the United States or Mayor of New York, it is gathered, as it were, into a single-member constituency, and the man is chosen by the majority of the voters, with the minorities getting no representation.

If many representatives are to be elected and the area is divided into local constituencies, each electing one representative, the majority of voters in each constituency carries the day, and again the minorities are done away with. However, the party which in a given constituency is in the minority may be in the majority in the adjoining one. Thus minorities, by taking advantage of local circumstances, have a chance of winning representation here and there even if in the country as a whole they are not in the majority.

Proportional representation was devised in order to allow not only the majority but also all minorities to be represented in local councils and central parliaments according to their numerical strength. It is a perfect system of suffrage as long as no more than two parties are in the field. Then the number of representatives obtained by each of the two parties is exactly proportionate to the number of its followers. It is a good system also when the competing parties are more than two, but one of them musters a majority of the voters; then the majority gains power while all the minority parties get representation according to their numerical strength. In all these cases, with single-member constituencies or under P. R., there is a majority which rules, while the minority or many minorities supervise the activities of the majority.

Trouble arises under P. R. as soon as there come into being three or more political parties none of which musters a majority of the voters. In this case no efficient administration can result unless some of the parties form a coalition capable of capturing a plurality. Unfortunately, coalitions are more difficult to achieve under P. R. than under a system of single-member constituencies.

Under the latter system the different parties must combine during the electoral campaign into no more than two coalitions in order to get a plurality and conquer the seat. Those who refuse to cooperate with other parties, if they are not strong enough to get a plurality, court defeat. In addition, when the contest is over, the coalition which got the plurality goes to power without the electorate being shocked by this fact, since the coalition had already been working during the campaign and the winning majority in the electorate had indorsed it. Vice versa, P. R. leads each party, during the electoral campaign, to stress its own particular features as clearly and as uncompromisingly as possible. As a result, when the campaign is over, the utterances of the election period act as obstacles to a coalition among groups whose leaders, on the previous day, had boasted of being poles apart. Even when a coalition is formed, and some coalition has to be formed unless a new election is summoned, the cooperation of the different partners in it is half-hearted and inefficient because each group not only remembers the previous electoral contest but, more especially, must keep its eye on the coming one. From a mathematical point of view P. R. is perfect. But it makes efficient government difficult. And what people need is not mathematical satisfaction but government. And government is possible only if there is a solid majority which rules.

Mr. LaGuardia, and Mr. O'Dwyer, and Mr. Hartmann, and Mr. Davies might all be good or bad mayors of New York. But suppose the Mayor of New York were to be elected by a municipal council which in its turn was to be elected under a system of P. R. In the city elections of last November the Republicans, the American Labor Party, the City Fusion Party, and the Union City Party would not have been obliged to combine behind LaGuardia in order to get a majority of the votes; Mr. Davies's followers, who withdrew from the contest before Election Day, would have stood their ground, thinking with good foundation that their votes would have a considerable weight in the future municipal council; the Socialists would have got at least one representative; and perhaps also the followers of Mr. O'Dwyer would have split into minor groups. All the candidates would have hurled at one another the same charges with which Mr. LaGuardia and Mr. O'Dwyer edified the electorate. The municipal council would have contained mathematically proportional representation of all these competing groups. But a municipal council divided into so many groups, embittered by the struggle for power, would have had difficulty in agreeing on a strong personality; and in any case a mayor elected by such a council and accountable to it for the whole of his term of office would most likely be a failure.

These things and many others can be said against P. R. and are to be found in Dr. Hermens's study, to which Professor Friedrich of Harvard has contributed an excellent preface. I have to confess that I once advocated P. R. in Italy, but the experience of Italy from 1919 to 1922 and that of the Weimar Republic had shaken my faith even before I read this book. Political scientists and politicians in this country would do well to read it and meditate upon it.

It seems to me, however, that Dr. Hermens lays at the door of P. R. too many evils for which other causes were responsible in Italy and Germany, that he adorns with too many miraculous gifts the single-member constituency, and that his theory is weakened rather than strengthened by too much speculating about how much better things would have been if a system of single-member constituencies had prevailed. A supporter of the latter system could too often reverse Dr. Hermens's "ifs" and maintain that things would have gone even worse if Dr. Hermens had had his way. Arguments by "ifs," unless they are used with economy, are apt to sow controversy rather than carry agreement.

GAETANO SALVEMINI

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DRAMA

"The Rivals"

I AM not prepared to say at precisely what moment it was that "The Rivals" ceased to be one of the two most successful and most durable pieces of hokum ever designed for the English stage and became, instead, a classic to which solemn school children must be shepherded by conscientious instructors. By now, however, the transformation is so definitely complete that reviewers can praise the Theater Guild's new production at the Shubert Theater for its refreshing irreverence—though just how you would play Mrs. Malaprop or Bob Acres reverently it is a little hard for me to imagine—and ordinary spectators will probably find their inclination to laugh somewhat impeded by the fear that they are being exposed to education.

So far as the play itself is concerned, it has, when considered purely as a viable piece for the contemporary stage, its weaknesses and its strength. Chief among the former are both the fact that the satire on a particular variety of romantic sentimentalism infecting young girls of the period is meaningful today only in so far as the analogy with current forms of folly is evident, and the further fact that present-day audiences are very likely to be bored by those highly conventionalized intrigues involving mistaken identities and elaborately planned deceits which everybody seems to have enjoyed for a good two hundred years and which probably nobody really enjoys now. Among the sources of its strength are the skilful use of farcical situations still serving writers less adept and flashes of wit which still coruscate.

Sheridan's writing is both more robust and more coarse-grained than Congreve's, but there are bravura speeches like that of the sensitive Faulkland on the subject of girls who dance when their lovers are absent which achieve a fine effect of cumulative absurdity, and there are bits like that when the bellicose Sir Lucius silences Bob Acres's wish that in the duel he might have a little right on his side with the pertinent exclamation, "What the devil signifies right, when your honor is concerned? Do you think Achilles or my little Alexander the Great ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broadswords and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it," which are just about as pertinent as they ever were. Unlike either Wycherley or Congreve, Sheridan was never equal to the intellectual feat of sustaining a consistent comic attitude throughout a play. He was, for one thing, far too ready to yield to sentiment as the easiest theatrical way out of a situation, and for another, probably too averse to sustained thought ever to be quite sure himself where he stood, so that a few years after "The Rivals" he could do on Lady Teazle one of the most disgraceful jobs of whitewashing to which a decent dramatist ever stooped. But there are flashes which reveal that his kinship with the great creators of intellectual comedy is as real as that with the modern tradition of farce which he helped to found.

The Guild production starts with a text which adds a prologue, some incidental songs, and concluding speeches by Arthur Guiterman, but which also, in addition to indulging in some minor tinkerings with the dialogue, discards the whole first scene and most of the sentimental conclusion—with the result that though the audience is spared some lush moralizing at the end it is also left with a pretty sketchy justification for the whole intrigue, which has little point unless the heroine's rooted aversion to any suitor who doesn't come over the garden wall is firmly established. Miss Le Gallienne, the director, has so many stars to work with that the production carries a suggestion of a Players' Club revival, but the presence of Bobby Clark lifts the whole thing to quite another level. Haila Stoddard is very charming as the languishing Lydia, Mary Boland very authoritative as Mrs. Malaprop, and Walter Hampden appropriately heavy as the heavy father. Several of the other performers are equally satisfactory. But it is Mr. Clark who adds the touch of genius; and, indeed, the most notable thing about the production may be just the fact that it furnishes the solidest foundation so far for the new reputation of that comedian as a "legitimate" performer. In "Men Are All Alike" he was merely gyrating in the vacuum provided by a non-existent play; in the revival of "Love for Love" he stole the show, which tended to collapse under the vigor of antics almost too much for the very fragile structure of the whole. But "The Rivals" is robustious enough throughout to furnish just the opportunity he needs, and he can be incomparably the most entertaining part of the proceedings while still remaining, as he was not before, really a part of them.

One can recognize in Mr. Clark many of the attributes usually characteristic of the best low comedians. He has the abounding energy which enables him to add those additional flourishes, those grace-notes and trills of absurdity, which make the difference between a competent performance and one which seems richer than anyone has a right to expect. Thus, to change the metaphor, he is continually adding that last straw which breaks the camel's back of solemnity and wins the roar which we cannot but emit. He has also a delight in his own antics which is irresistibly contagious, and that gleam of triumph in his eye, that conscious delight in his own folly, which asks for and gets the response of an audience. But I still do not know exactly why so simple a thing as the flourish with which he sprinkles sand on the just-written challenge is so excruciatingly hilarious. That is Mr. Clark's secret, which I can only hope he will neither keep hidden nor lose.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

FILMS

HAPPILY only one war epic to report from Hollywood this week; other films are of the usual type, but showing a distinct improvement in quality. The pleasantest surprise is "I Wake Up Screaming"—the title is certainly original, if somewhat blunt—a murder story with a psychological twist, brilliantly directed and photographed, with an economy of dialogue and a consciousness of the screen as a medium which make the rather commonplace plot appear novel and exciting. The cast—Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Carole Landis, Laird Cregar—is not very distinguished, and the production costs must have been almost, if not quite, in the B category, but an intelligent use of light and shadow and a well-arranged musical score which emphasizes the suspense of the plot have made this picture far more entertaining than most of the star-studded, extravagant Hollywood productions. Mr. Mature has made a remarkable recovery from his spell as a "beautiful hunk of a man" in "Lady in the Dark," and proves himself a most competent actor, while Mr. Cregar contributes a performance to make anyone, no matter what the state of their conscience, wake up screaming.

"Ball of Fire" allows Gary Cooper to exploit his talent for combining charm with gaucherie and at the same time

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manages to avoid being a hackneyed star vehicle simply by having hit on a rather funny basic idea. Mr. Cooper plays one of a group of professors engaged in compiling an encyclopedia, his task being, when the picture opens, to write a treatise on slang, a subject of which his cloistered life has given him no first-hand knowledge. It remains for Barbara Stanwyck as a tough night-club singer and close associate of gangsters to teach him a few up-to-date expressions and to play havoc with his bookworm-eaten heart. This would have been a better picture if an aura of exaggerated sentimentality and eccentricity had not been thrown around the professors, whose behavior is as quaint as that of Snow White's seven dwarfs.

Preston Sturges, who has to his credit such excellent pictures as "The Lady Eve" and "Christmas in July," makes a nasty blot on his copy book with "Sullivan's Travels." Perhaps Mr. Sturges, like the successful novelist, has been forced by popular demand to be overproductive, for he seems to have run out of original ideas. "Sullivan's Travels" is, I think, meant to carry a social message to the effect that everyone wants to laugh and not bother his head over silly old poverty or anything unpleasant like that. This message would carry more weight if Mr. Sturges had succeeded in being funny, but having borrowed a little from Frank Capra for his thesis and from Orson Welles for his technique, he reverts to the Keystone comedy for his humor, and dishes out a succession of automobile chases, custard pies, and comic falls which is likely to drive the audience to gloomy and private thoughts. Veronica Lake, after an initial reluctance to brush her hair off her face, generously allows us to see both eyes, and Joel McCrea lends a certain charm to the character of the movie director who wants to experience poverty in order to make a picture about it.

Elisabeth Bergner, after a long absence from the screen, is to be seen in a drama entitled "Paris Calling," all about the fall of France. It is strange that apparently no one has realized that it is impossible to exploit contemporary tragedies for entertainment purposes without making them seem incredibly false. Miss Bergner is a fine actress who deserves better material than this.

ANTHONY BOWER

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RECORDS

VICTOR'S December set of Fauré's Requiem (844, $5.50) has straggled in. All of Fauré's music is beautifully written; but this is the one work, among those I have heard, that has impressed me as proceeding from emotion which, though reticently expressed, is deeply felt. Pelletier's performance with the Montreal Festivals Orchestra, Les Disciples de Massenet, Mack Harrell, Marcelle Denya, and Roland Roy at the organ, is good and is excellently recorded. The French performance in the older Columbia set, which I could rehear only on a small machine, seemed more sensitively wrought; but its recorded sound, though good, is probably less impressively brilliant and spacious on a large machine.

With this has arrived also Victor's December set of Glière's Symphony "Ilia Murometz" played by Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra (Set 841, $6.50). The work is a minor, diffuse, and in the end tiresome example of Russian nationalist writing, much of which you have heard before in Rimsky-Korsakov and Ippolitov-Ivanov; and it must have interested Stokowski because of the opportunities it gave him for the brilliant and occasionally strident sonorities on these records.

Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra also provide the accompaniments for Helen Traubel in the January set of three of Wagner's songs to poems of Mathilde Wesendonck: "Träume," "Schmerzen," and "Im Treibhaus" (Set 872, $2.50). "Träume" and "Im Treibhaus" use material which is used more effectively in the second-act duet and Prelude to Act 3, respectively, of "Tristan and Isolde"; and the songs are only moderately interesting. Miss Traubel's voice is steady, powerful, and opulent in "Schmerzen" and "Im Treibhaus," but is afflicted with tremolo in "Träume"; as recorded it blankets the orchestral part a good deal of the time—most regrettably in "Im Treibhaus"; and "Träume" is given with its orchestral introduction lopped off.

An excellent performance by Koussevitzky with the Boston Symphony, recorded with hard brilliance (Set 848, $2.50), provided the occasion to hear Sibelius's "Tapiola" again after a number of years, to hear it, moreover, with Ernest Newman's notes telling me again what marvels were issuing from the phonograph, and nevertheless to be amazed all over again by the nothing-at-all for twenty minutes with which Sibelius managed to convince himself he had produced a piece of music and to convince Newman he had produced "one of the greatest works in the whole range of symphonic music."

After this pretentious tripe of Sibelius, whose merest hiccough moves Newman to solemnity and technical analysis, it is a relief and a pleasure to listen to something even as moderately substantial and enjoyable as the music of the eighteenth-century composer William Boyce that Constant Lambert put together for the ballet "The Prospect Before Us." And the pleasure is increased by the beautifully finished playing which the Sadler's Wells Orchestra does under Lambert's direction, and the balance, cleanness, and refinement of its recorded sound (Set 857, $3.50).

Boyce's little opera "The Chaplet" was given at the final Coffee Concert of the Museum of Modern Art, and turned out to be not worth the performer's trouble and the audience's attention. The Negro cast included a contralto, Carol Brice, who was extraordinary in the beauty of her voice, the ease of her singing, the apparently natural good taste of her phrasing. The best concert of the series was "Hebraica," at which Naomi Aléh-Leaf and the Uri Taiman group offered Yemenite songs and dances, and Ezekiel Albeg gave examples of the cantillation of the Jews of Bagdad. The flaw in this program was the disturbing nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts provided by the piano accompaniments for the group of two sixteenth-century songs of the Spanish Jews and two Chassidic songs, and the pretentious style in which these songs were done by Sarah Gorby. "Cuadro Flamenco" had the excellent guitarrist Villarino and singer and dancer Anita Sevilla, but the flashily inferior dancer Antonio Triana; the two jazz concerts also offered a few good things like Maxine Sullivan's swinging of English folksongs, Anna Robinson's extravagances, some J. C. Higginbotham's trombone-playing, and things as bad as Maxine Sullivan's swinging of Schubert's "Who Is Sylvia?", boogie-woogie played on the harpsichord by Sylvia Marlowe, and the exhibitionistic stunts and noise that are inevitable on such occasions.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

The Federation of the Free

Dear Sirs: Reinhold Niebuhr's review of "Design for Power" in the issue of January 10 appears to me, as coauthor with George D. Brodsky of the volume in question, to create an impression which is at best unfortunate and at worst misleading. This is the more deplorable as Dr. Niebuhr sees eye to eye with the authors on fundamentals. I trust therefore that neither he nor the editors will take amiss a few words of correction.

First, and least important, the book is not "a history of the Second World War" or a piece of "journalism." I am indeed guilty of perpetrating a history of the first phase of the conflict in the form of a highly detailed and documented analysis. Its title, however, is not "Design for Power" but "Night over Europe," published early last year. The scope and nature of the more recent book can be grasped quite easily by anyone who bothers to look at the Table of Contents and the design of the first seven chapters. It is—I am quite willing to let Dr. Niebuhr in on the secret—a narrative, an analysis, an atlas, and a critique of the foreign policies of the seven great powers from Versailles to Pearl Harbor. Its "purpose" is not, as Dr. Niebuhr alleges, "fully revealed in the final chapter," to the last three pages of which he devotes almost all of his review. The last chapter merely states certain conclusions regarding the culture crisis of our time and offers certain speculations about things to come.

What I most regret is that Dr. Niebuhr's reading of the last few pages of the last chapter—which incidentally, like the rest of the book, is written in quite simple English—leaves him all at sea regarding what is said there because of his fogginess as to the meaning of certain terms in everyday use. Though Dr. Niebuhr declares that he also favors a democratic world federation, it is clear that he does not know what this means. Yet the advocates of federalism as a cure for world anarchy have been crying from the housetops for years that the basic answers to the questions which Dr. Niebuhr poses *de novo* are to be found in the written constitutions and the political experience of the successful federal democracies of our time—the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Switzerland, *et al.*

To say with Dr. Niebuhr that the "abolition of the 'sovereignty' and 'independence' of states" means the creation of a "super-state," potentially "imperialistic" and "tyrannical," is all but equivalent to saying that the United States is an imperialistic, tyrannical, super-state imposed upon New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, etc. Of course Dr. Niebuhr does not believe this. He knows that it is a free federation of democratic commonwealths which have not at all suffered any "total abrogation" of their "sovereignty." He should know that a democratic federation by definition has none of the attributes which he rightly condemns and that it contains in its own constitutional structure the solution of the problems which he finds so perplexing. To equate "élite" with "imperialism," "super-state" with "federation," "power politics" with all politics, and "world organization" with "imperial power" is to indulge in semantic confusions which, I venture to believe, are nowhere to be found in the book reviewed but only in the mind of the reviewer. To say finally that "one cannot be at all certain that the author is thinking of a democratic world order" is simply an admission that he has not read through even the last pages of the last chapter of the book.

Let Dr. Niebuhr not look to political scientists for blueprints. Let him read the Constitution of the United States, the *Federalist* papers, the works of Lincoln and Wilson, and the recent writings of Streit, Humber, and Curry. Let him study Winston Churchill's belated offer of "Union Now" to France in June of 1940. Above all, let him and all other good men and true reflect that the establishment of a democratic world federation can only emerge from the imagination and the wisdom distilled out of the spirit of all free peoples in the crucible of war. The coming Federation of the Free will not be imposed from above. It will grow up from below out of the sufferings and the needs, the experiences and the aspirations, of all the peoples who know the meaning in their daily lives of the international anarchy which must be abolished and of the federal democracy which must be extended to world-wide scope if the war and the peace are to be won.

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN

Williamstown, Mass., January 13

No Adequate Blueprints

Dear Sirs: Professor Schuman seeks to refute my rather mild criticism of a lack of clarity and precision in his conceptions of world organization by explicitly disavowing the measure of political realism I had ascribed to him. He finds the answer to the problem of international government "in the written constitutions of the successful democracies" and the blueprints for a world order in "the works of Lincoln and Wilson and the recent writings of Streit, Humber, and Curry."

This means that his thought moves on the basis of the assumption that problems of political integration on new and higher levels can be solved by application of experience gained on the lower levels. I challenge this whole assumption. The international community is as different from the national community as the nation is from the family. Every new level of political organization rests less upon natural forces of social cohesion and requires a shrewder manipulation of power and of political mechanics. National communities rest upon some degrees of ethnic unity, some measure of homogeneity in culture, and very certainly upon geographic limitation. Furthermore, the fear of foes, which prompted their unity in part, is a more potent force than the general fear of anarchy.

The international community that we must organize must harmonize vast vitalities, abridge age-old sovereignties, arbitrate between incommensurate interests, and do all this without the basis of a common history or a homogeneous culture. To prevent imperialism on the one hand and anarchy on the other in the international community is different in degree to the point of being different in kind from the same problem on the level of the national community.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

New York, January 16

Don't Coddle the Movies

Dear Sirs: You have taught me to expect a high standard of criticism in your book, theater, and music reviews. So it is somewhat painful to find "Philadelphia Story" and "How Green Was My Valley" referred to as "first-rate pictures" by your Mr. Bower.

Mr. Bower would have done well to

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end his review with the first sentence, in which he said that 1941 would be remembered as one of the worst in the history of the motion-picture industry. The daily press in its reviews is doing its share of "coddling" of the movies. *The Nation* ought to keep clear of such reviewing.

BERNARD J. FRIED

Brooklyn, N. Y., January 13

The Post-War Collapse:

Savers Must Invest

Dear Sirs: The two articles by Harold Strauss dealing with our post-war economy (January 3 and 10) were of great interest, but the logic of his reasoning leads to a somewhat more drastic conclusion than he arrives at. He shows that in a mature economy continued investment in the expansion of the means of production results in a narrowing margin of profit and a declining rate of interest. The capitalist class, therefore—meaning the owners of industry and those who own or control investment funds—are opposed to expansion. And they will prevent expansion after the war by holding investment funds idle, as they did during the thirties. But even though they cease investing they will not voluntarily reduce their saving. This hoarding of investment funds causes unemployment and depression.

As a remedy Mr. Strauss suggests government investment, or devices for inducing investment, or both.

Investment cannot be induced, however, unless investors are allowed to name the terms and conditions upon which they will invest. What these terms are can be discovered in any conservative program: lower income and profits taxes, and reduced expenditures for public welfare. But these would clearly aggravate depression rather than relieve it.

A huge program of public works, on a scale comparable to the rearmament program, would give us reasonably full employment, but it would not result in an expansion of industry—which is a prerequisite of a rising standard of living. If public works were financed by borrowing, then a triple benefit would be conferred upon investors and the owners of industry: first, existing plants could operate at approximate capacity and at a high rate of profit, as they are doing now; secondly, excess savings could be profitably invested in government bonds; and, thirdly, the plant and equipment of industry could be restricted to its present capacity without causing a depression.

If we take a rising standard of living as our objective, and if we accept Mr. Strauss's analysis of the problem, then the remedy indicated is a tax on idle investment funds owned by individuals and business concerns. Society would say to capitalists: Your function is to save and to invest; if you save without investing, then workers are thrown out of employment and the economy sinks down in depression; therefore if you save you must invest. If you refuse, then society will tax away your idle funds, for which you can find no use, and put them to some good purpose.

GEORGE R. WALKER

Boston, Mass., January 14

And Progressives Must Act

Dear Sirs: I've just read Harold Strauss's Program for a Peace Economy, and I am wondering how energetically you will follow it up. I hope that publication of the article is not merely a trial balloon but a first stepping-stone toward attainment of the objectives described.

What can be done about it? Strauss says that "it is not possible to expect conservatives to support a program such as has been outlined." But, for that matter, how readily will it be accepted and implemented by non-conservatives?

Dreamily, Strauss says, "If democracy means anything, it means that the people of America can and will find a way to avoid such a collapse." There you have your modern John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness. The immorality he refers to has flourished a long time. None of the three strong factors in the current scene—government, business, labor—shows any marked sign of making a new approach to the problems of modern economy. In what direction shall we look for leadership, organization, education, and implementation?

Those who agree with Strauss in principle should form a board of strategy. When we speak of democracy we are speaking of some fifty million voters and their elected representatives. Democracy is political and economic. Blocking the attainment of the progressive ideal is the stupendous inertia of political and economic habit.

The development of war politics and economics is producing a situation in which the nuclear centers of progressivism should functionally expand. First-rate observation, comprehension, analysis, vision, and the like have not been lacking. Now leadership, organization, strategy, programs, and incessant endeavor should be forthcoming.

For years I used to edit what, in the sales promotional field, we called "house organs" or "house magazines." One of our main efforts was to encourage reader response, be it ever so humble. But then, of course, we had something to sell. Possibly in the field of journalism of the liberal persuasion similar methods should be instituted.

EMORY L. KING

Ridgefield Park, N. J., January 14

Request to the Soviet Union

Dear Sirs: On December 4 two leaders of the Jewish labor movement in Poland, Henryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter, were arrested in Kuybyshev by the Soviet authorities. They had been arrested once before, in September, 1939, during the occupation of Poland by the Soviet army. On that occasion they were deported to inner Russia. They were liberated in the fall of 1941 after the signing of the first Polish-Russian agreement. This time they were arrested without any explanation, the Soviet authorities refusing to disclose the charges against them.

Alter and Ehrlich have been energetic and devoted fighters against Nazism and for democracy. Notwithstanding the suffering inflicted by the Soviet government on Poland and on them personally, they supported without reservation the policy of Soviet-Polish understanding and the formation of the Polish army in Russia. Some days before their arrest they issued the following appeal to the Poles in the Soviet Union:

> A new Polish army is being formed today to continue the fight against Hitler. We take this opportunity to appeal to every able-bodied Polish citizen in the Soviet Union.
>
> Join the ranks of soldiers who once again will enter the fight for Poland's right to independence and who, together with the other Allied armies, will free Poland and the rest of the world from intolerable brown slavery. To those of you who are unable to bear arms we appeal to do all in your power to help the army to achieve victory.
>
> Participation in the present war is a duty and an honor. In the name of the Jewish working masses and of Jewish intellectuals who have placed their confidence in us, we declare our readiness to do our part in the struggle and ask for the opportunity to do so.
>
> H. EHRLICH, W. ALTER
>
> (From *Poland Fights,* December 23, 1941)

In a world struggle for democracy it is not too much to ask the Soviet government to reassure the United Nations by freeing these men at once.

FRANK KINGDON

New York, January 15

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